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S. GILBERT OF SEMPRINGHAM
AND THE GILBERTINES

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THE SOUTH DOORWAY, S. ANDREW'S, SEMPRINGHAM, 1898.
[*Frontispiece.*

S. GILBERT OF SEMPRINGHAM AND THE GILBERTINES

A HISTORY OF THE ONLY ENGLISH MONASTIC ORDER

BY

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(LATE OF SOMERVILLE COLLEGE, OXFORD)

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PREFACE

ALTHOUGH S. Gilbert of Sempringham was famous in the Middle Ages, even his name is now unknown to many Englishmen. He is, however, worthy of remembrance, as the founder of the only English monastic Order. He has probably been forgotten because the Order never spread out of England, and therefore his work was utterly destroyed at the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

S. Gilbert founded the Order of Sempringham during the great religious revival which took place in the troublous reign of Stephen. The distinguishing feature of the Order was the revival of the double monastery, "in which a society of 'regular' priests ministered to the spiritual needs of 'regular' women." This institution, which arose in the first days of Eastern monasticism, flourished in England in the second half of the seventh century; but, owing to the ravages of the Danes, it died out after a hundred years.[1]

The life of S. Gilbert was written soon after his death by a canon of Sempringham, and from this Latin original, in the fifteenth century, John Capgrave, an Austin friar of Lynn, wrote the English story of the saint. But the quaint words of Capgrave are unfortunately lost to us: in the fire among the Cotton MSS. in 1731 the MS. was so badly burnt that it is impossible to read more than a few words

[1] "Origin and Early History of Double Monasteries," by Mary Bateson. *Cf.* Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, vol. xiii.

together. The only modern account of S. Gilbert which I have come across is an essay in "The Lives of the English Saints," written, in 1844, at the suggestion of Cardinal Newman.

In spite of its unusual interest, the history of the Order of Sempringham has never been written before. The materials used in the second and third chapters are almost all to be found in Dugdale's Monasticon; other sources are indicated in the footnotes. I have followed the example of Mr. J. Willis Clark in preferring the English words dorter, frater, farmery, and parlour, to the Latin forms dormitory, refectory, infirmary, and auditorium. The sketch of the history of the Order contained in the sixth chapter, is only an attempt to point out its most striking features; owing to the absence of materials, a very difficult task. In the chapter on the Dissolution,[2] Father Gasquet's book on "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries" has been of great service to me.

I regret very much that I have been unable to visit the sites of many of the Gilbertine houses. I wish to express very grateful thanks to the Rev. P. S. Wilson, vicar of Horbling, Lincolnshire, and to Mrs. Taylor, of Clattercote Priory, for their kind hospitality; as well as to the Rev. Dr. Wrenford, vicar of Sempringham; the Rev. H. Nevitt, vicar of Nun Ormsby; the Rev. A. N. Claye, vicar of Glamford Brigg; the Rev. H. P. Smith, rector of Ruskington; the Rev. I. Dixon-Spain, vicar of Wragby; the Rev. G. T. W. Purchas, vicar of Watton; the Rev. W. Ingham, vicar of Old Malton; the Rev. G. Robinson, vicar of Ellerton; the Rev. W. J. Mayne, formerly vicar of Poulton; the Rev. S. Kennedy, vicar of Mattersey; the Rev. W. M. Allen, vicar of Shouldham; the Rev. G. M. Osborn, rector of Campton; the Rev. L. Hensley, vicar of St. Mary's, Hitchin; and the Rev. A. W. Ivatt, vicar of Fordham, for the courteous help I have received from

[2] I have purposely retained the original spelling, for its own interest, in some letters in which it has previously been printed.

them in answer to inquiries about information only to be obtained from local sources.

With regard to the illustrations, my best thanks are due to Mr. St. John Hope for his courteous permission to reproduce the ground-plan of Watton, drawn by him from excavations on the site for the East Riding Antiquarian Society, and for his kind help in the matter; to the Rev. W. J. Mayne for a sketch of Poulton in his possession; to Mr. W. H. Jones for copying the sketch, and for drawing the coat of arms, which is taken from Taylor's "Index Monasticus." I am indebted to Mr. E. Essam, of Billingborough, for his courtesy in allowing me to reproduce his photograph of the south door of Sempringham; to Mr. A. James, Ramsgate House, Louth, for the photograph of the churches of Alvingham and Cockerington S. Mary; to Mr. G. Moulden, of Hitchin, for the photographs of Chicksand and Hitchin; and to Messrs. Valentine, of Dundee, for the photographs of Old Malton.

I have great pleasure in expressing my thanks to Mr. R. L. Poole for much valuable help and advice, and to Mr. Madan for his kind assistance while I was working in the Bodleian Library.

I wish to record my special gratitude to my friend, Miss F. Hermia Durham, who read the whole of the manuscript, and helped me very much by her criticisms and suggestions.

ROSE GRAHAM.

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ERRATA

P. 42, l. 11, insert "The house of S. Margaret's by Marlborough was probably founded by King John at the beginning of his reign."

P. 42, between notes 83 and 84, insert "ibid. p. 981."

P. 48, note 2, add "now MS. Douce 136, Bodleian Library."

P. 55, l. 33, for "stood apart in the garden," read "opened off the cloister."

P. 56, l. 17, omit "in a remote corner of the garden."

P. 56, l. 32, for "a" read "another," and omit "on the south side of the church," and note 32.

P. 57, l. 28, for "thirteen" read "thirty."

P. 125 and in Index, read "Sampson."

P. 144, l. 13, read "Chicksand."

P. 155, ll. 14, 21, read "Nigel."

P. 174, l. 23, for "Cromwell" read "the King."

P. 182, l. 18, read "Hallom."

P. 199, l. 6, omit "then," and after "married" insert "in 1549."

P. 210, l. 17, and in Index, read "Poynton."

P. 213, l. 30, to p. 215, l. 1, instead read Appendix.

S. GILBERT OF SEMPRINGHAM AND THE GILBERTINES

I.

S. GILBERT OF SEMPRINGHAM.

S. GILBERT was born in or before 1089[1] at Sempringham, a parish on the border of the fens between Heckington and Bourn, in Lincolnshire.

Nothing remains to preserve the name of the village in which he spent so many peaceful years as a parish priest, but the church of S. Andrew at Sempringham. It stands alone in the midst of green fields, the rich pasture lands of the Priory. Some irregular grassy mounds in a field to the west mark the site of the priory church of S. Mary and some of the monastic buildings, as well as of the "fair mansion" raised with its stones by Lord Clinton after the Dissolution. Even the face of the country has changed much since the days of S. Gilbert. Then Sempringham was on the edge of the great fens of the Wash. "They stretched northward up the Witham almost as far as Lincoln, and southwards up the Cam as far as Cambridge, and they reached inland to Huntingdon and Stamford"; "a wilderness of shallow waters and reedy islets, wrapped

[1] Gilbert's biographer said that he was more than a hundred years old when he died on February 4, 1189. Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xxii. and xxix. The Bollandists said that he was a hundred and six, but "sex" was probably a corruption of "senex." "Vita apud Act. Sanct.," February, vol. i. p. 573.

in its own dark mist-veil and tenanted only by flocks of screaming wild-fowl."[2] Only the settlements which clustered around religious houses like Boston, Ely, Crowland, and Peterborough, stood out in its midst. "To the south of the Witham, over the country which is now known as Kesteven, a mass of dense woodland stretched from the fen-country about Boston across the heights into the basin of the Trent."[3] Now fertile cultivated lands stretch away on every side in monotonous flatness, only broken by the spires of numerous churches; these recall the prosperous days of the wool trade of the fourteenth century, when the country was far more populous than now.[4]

A canon, "one of the least of the brothers of Sempringham," who had known Gilbert well, wrote the story of his life[5] at the request of his successor, Master Roger, and dedicated it to Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury.[6] He used a book written by Gilbert, "De Constructione Monasteriorum," of which there is now no trace, and he carefully recorded the incidents told him by Roger, Albinus, the faithful chaplain, and others. His work is no extravagant eulogy, but a simple straightforward narrative of facts, interspersed, like the work of all monks, with quotations from the Vulgate.

Jocelin,[7] Gilbert's father, was a wealthy Norman knight,

[2] J. R. Green, "The Making of England," p. 56; *cf.* Pearson's "Historical Maps of England," p. 3.

[3] J. R. Green, "The Making of England," p. 351.

[4] Ibid., p. 57; *cf.* Camden, "Britannia" (ed. 1695), p. 459.

[5] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. ff 37^{v}–168, an early thirteenth century manuscript. It contains two treatises on the miracles of Gilbert, and a series of letters relating to the rebellion of the lay-brothers, and the canonisation. Almost all these were omitted by Dugdale in the transcript, which is printed in Monasticon vi. 2, pp. v.–xxix. (inserted between pp. 945 and 947). MS. Harl. 468 pl. lii. A Brit. Mus., a late thirteenth century manuscript, and MS. Digby 36, Bodleian Library, a fifteenth century manuscript, are identically the same as MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1.

[6] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. ff 33–36.

[7] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. v.

who held lands in Lincolnshire from Gilbert de Gant of Folkingham.[8] His mother was a Saxon lady "of lower rank."[9] "Before the child was born, she saw in her dreams that the moon came down from heaven, and she held it in her lap. This indeed was a sign, as it was afterwards made manifest, that, like a torch prepared by God, her son should wax great in the world: just as a spark hid in the ashes, when placed on a candlestick, shines with great brightness to give light to all who are in the house of the Lord."[10] However, the child gave no promise that the vision would be fulfilled. Some repulsive physical deformity, which unfitted him for the calling of arms, drew on him the ridicule of the rough Norman household: as he himself often told his followers, he was so despised at home, that "even the serving-men would not sit at meat with him."[11] No doubt his mother's early training made him the good, pure, gentle man, who all his life reverenced women and had so wonderful an influence over them. Bitterly disappointed that he could not make a knight of his misshapen son, Jocelin determined to give him a clerk's education.[12] His teacher, perhaps his father's chaplain, found him a dull and idle pupil, for, as his biographer told, "the labour of learning, which is wont to heavily afflict boys, frightened his tender years." At last, when "severely chidden by his parents, either from shame or fear," he fled from his father's house to France, whither so many young English clerks wandered in search of learning. There

[8] Gilbert de Gant was a son of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, whose sister, Matilda, was the wife of William the Conqueror. He was granted a hundred and five lordships, of which the chief was Folkingham, in Lincolnshire. Dugdale, "The Baronage of England," vol. i. p. 400.

[9] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. v., "non inferioris tamen conditionis." "Non" is an interpolation in a later hand in MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 37^{v}. "Non" is omitted in MS. Digby 36, and in MS. Harl. 468, pl. lii. A.

[10] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. v.

[11] Ibid.

[12] *Et seq.*, Ibid., "De Adolescentia ejus."

"he put away childish things, and shaking off his former sloth, turned his attention carefully to letters."

There is no evidence as to the place at which he studied. His former master might have attended the famous school of the Norman Abbey of Bec, in which Lanfranc and Anselm taught before they were summoned to Canterbury. Gilbert could have gained his title of Master "in liberal and spiritual studies" at any of the great cathedral schools of Tours, Chartres, or Rheims.[13] It may be that at Paris he heard William of Champeaux lecture on dialectic in the Priory of S. Victor, or that he accompanied the scholars who flocked to attend the rival school of Abelard on the hill of S. Geneviève. He resisted the many temptations which beset clerks living in a medieval town; his biographer said that he had but few friends, and strove "to wed the discipline of a good life to liberal knowledge," holding that "wisdom without virtue is a widow."[14]

When Gilbert came home to Sempringham, his learning and goodness gave him a very different position in his father's house.[15] He wore goodly raiment "becoming his birth," but he bore himself in all humility. Longing "to gain souls for God" by his words and by the example of his unspotted life, he began "to trade with the talent of knowledge which he had abundantly received," and to hold schools for the boys and girls of the neighbourhood. Although afterwards the Canon Law required that even in country parishes the parish clerk should be able to teach the boys to read as well as to sing their Psalter,[16] this regulation was not in force in the early Middle Ages. The Cathedral School of Lincoln was nearly thirty miles from Sempringham, and there was no religious house for men or women in the neighbourhood at which

[13] Rashdall, "The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," vol. i. p. 278.

[14] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. v., "De Adolescentia ejus."

[15] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, "Qualiter rexit Scholas," p. vi.

[16] Rashdall, "The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," vol. ii. part 2, p. 601.

the children might receive an education. "These," said his biographer, "are the first in whom the Order of Sempringham was founded."[17] "Though they were still seculars and Gilbert himself was in secular dress, he not only taught his scholars the rudiments of learning, but also morals and monastic discipline. He restrained the boys from their liberty of playing and wandering at will, and according to the monastic Rule he compelled them to be silent in church and to sleep together as in a dorter, to speak and to read only in the places which he chose out for them." Whether he taught boys and girls together, it is impossible to say; the girls gained a good knowledge of Latin.[18]

"Gilbert was a lover of truth and justice, chastity and sobriety, and a diligent cultivator of the other virtues: wherefore he was revered and praised by all and obtained their favour and regard. Even Jocelin now rejoiced in the goodness of his son, he began to cherish him with fatherly affection, and ministered to his needs out of his own riches."[19] He presented him to the vacant churches of Sempringham and West Torrington,[20] which he had built on his own demesne "in the custom of his country." Gilbert was unwilling, "as they say," but he consented that he might defend his father's rights of patronage.[21] He was "lawfully admitted and canonically instituted" by Robert Bloet, Bishop of Lincoln. "After many troublesome suits he possessed the churches in peace."

[17] *Cf.* note 15.

[18] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxxii., "Omnino prohibemus Latinam linguam inter omnes (moniales) nisi conveniens occasio compellat."

[19] *Cf.* note 15.

[20] MS. Tirington. The second church was undoubtedly West Torrington, near Wragby, in Lincolnshire. For a discussion of the evidence, *cf.* "Some Incidents in the History of a Lincolnshire Saint," a Paper read at the meeting of Lincolnshire Architectural Society at Great Grimsby, June 19, 1878, by the Rev. J. C. K. Saunders. *Cf.* "Archæological Journal," vol. xxxiii. p. 183.

[21] *Et seq., cf.* note 15.

As Gilbert was not in orders,[22] he appointed a chaplain named Geoffrey.[23] They lived together in the humble dwelling of a parishioner of Sempringham. His daughter was one of Gilbert's scholars, and she served them diligently. One night Gilbert saw in a dream that he put his hand into the maiden's bosom, and could not draw it away. Fearful of what this might portend, he confided it to Geoffrey, who also had misgivings. In consequence they went to live in a room over the south porch of the church. They afterwards built a house for themselves in the cemetery, in which they dwelt apart. Gilbert's biographer pointed out that the vision was fulfilled in the founding of the Order of Sempringham by him; the maiden was one of the first seven nuns.

Gilbert gave himself up entirely to the care of his people. "He taught them so well that, though seculars, they kept the rule of the monastic life in great part, for they held aloof from harvest feastings, indecent revelries, and public drinkings; they learnt to do works of mercy and to pay the church tithes duly." Whenever they entered a church, their devoutness and lowly bearing marked them out as his parishioners. In correcting the rebellious "the physician of souls" was very stern. When one of his parishioners would not pay the tithe of corn, Gilbert went to his barn and compelled him to count out the bundles before him; the tenth part he heaped up and burnt, thinking unfit for the use of man what had been stolen from God and Holy Church.

The fame of Gilbert reached Robert Bloet, and about

[22] "There was nothing irregular in this proceeding, for a license was allowed to students to hold ecclesiastical benefices without being as yet ordained." "In rescript of Alexander III., p. xv. c. 1, non-residence is allowed "studio literarum." As late as the Council of Rouen, 1231, the alternative is allowed to clerks possessing benefices, either of being ordained or of betaking themselves to the study of theology" (J. H. Newman, "Lives of the English Saints," vol. iii. p. 21, and note).

[23] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, "Qualiter rexit Ecclesias."

1122[24] he sent for him to serve as clerk in his household.[25]

Like many of the bishops of that age, Robert Bloet was a royal official who had received a bishopric as a reward, and he continued to serve the King rather than the Church. He was a chaplain of William the Conqueror, and was with him when he died at Rouen. Immediately afterwards he set out for England with William Rufus, to carry the letter sent by the Conqueror to Lanfranc, bidding him crown Rufus king.[26] Until 1092 Robert served Rufus as chancellor. In the first week of Lent in that year the King lay sick unto death at Gloucester;[27] his bishops and nobles came to him and implored him to repent of his evil deeds.[28] In terror of death, Rufus gave the archbishopric of Canterbury to the unwilling Anselm, Abbot of Bec, and the see of Lincoln to Robert Bloet.[29] Robert resigned the chancellorship, but under Henry I. he held the more important office of justiciar.[30] He was famed for the splendour of his household. "When I beheld the glory of our Bishop," wrote Henry of Huntingdon, one of his archdeacons, "honourable knights, noble youths, costly horses, gold and gilded vessels, the number of dishes, the splendour of his servants, the purple raiment

[24] There is no evidence as to the date. It was probably after the disgrace of Robert Bloet, when he retired to Lincoln. Gilbert's biographer gave a long account of his life in the household of Alexander, and only recorded the fact that he was first in that of Robert Bloet. Monasticon, vi. 2, p. vii., "Qualiter conversatus est in Curia Alexandri Episcopi."

[25] "Every great man had a great house and household, with his chapel or collegiate church at his capital house, and his school of clerks as well as pages" (Stubbs, "Lectures on Medieval and Modern History, p. 163, and also pp. 164, 165).

[26] Ordericus Vitalis, "Hist. Eccl.," bk. x. vol. iv. p. 11, ed. 1838, Paris.

[27] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, vol. ii. p. 196, Rolls Series.

[28] Eadmer, "Hist. Nov.," p. 30, Rolls Series. [29] *Cf.* note 27.

[30] Henry of Huntingdon, "Epistola de Contemptu Mundi," p. 299, Rolls Series.

and the torches, I could think of nothing more happy." [31] In the last year of his life he was twice impleaded by King Henry on the charge of an inferior justice; he was disgraced and condemned to pay a heavy fine in both instances.[32] He retired to his palace at Lincoln, overwhelmed with grief. "As I reclined by his side at dinner," said Henry of Huntingdon, "I saw him shedding tears, and asked him the reason. 'Once,' he said, 'those who stood around me wore costly raiment; now the fines of the King, whom I ever sought to please, have compelled them to put on lambs' wool.'" [33] Robert Bloet died on January 10, 1123. "The King was riding in his deerfold at Woodstock, and the Bishop Roger of Salisbury on one side of him, and the Bishop Robert Bloet of Lincoln on the other side of him; and they were there riding and talking. Then the Bishop of Lincoln sank down, and said said to the King, 'Lord King, I am dying.' And the King alighted down from his horse, and lifted him betwixt his arms, and caused him to be borne to his inn; and he was then forthwith dead; and he was conveyed to Lincoln with great worship, and buried before S. Mary's altar. And the Bishop of Chester, named Robert Pecceth, buried him." [34]

Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, persuaded King Henry to give the vacant see to his nephew, Alexander, archdeacon

[31] Henry of Huntingdon, "Epistola de Contemptu Mundi," p. 299, Rolls Series. [32] Ibid., p. 300. [33] Ibid.

[34] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, vol. ii. p. 217, Rolls Series.

Henry of Huntingdon ("Historiæ Anglorum," p. 244) gave the following verses as his epitaph:

"Pontificum Robertus honor, quem fama superstes
Perpetuare dabit, non obiturus obit.
Hic humilis dives, (res mira,) potens pius, ultor
Compatiens, mitis cum pateretur erat.
Noluit esse suis dominus, studiut pater esse,
Semper in adversis murus et arma suis,
In decima Jani mendacis somnia mundi
Liquit, et evigilans vera perenne videt."

of Sarum, who had been brought up by him in the greatest luxury.[35]

After the death of Robert Bloet, Gilbert "dwelt in the court of Alexander, without complaint, for he judged it good to live under episcopal rule."[36] In all the disquiet of the Bishop's court he never forgot his churches: reserving for himself enough only for the mere necessaries of life, he gave the whole of the revenues of West Torrington to the poor; he fed and clothed the orphan and the widow, the sick and the aged. He had the tonsure and the modest dress of a clerk; he was temperate in eating and drinking, sober in speech and stately in his walk. "Already," said his biographer, "you would have thought him a regular canon rather than a secular clerk."[37] "Whenever he could he secretly stole hours for prayer. He not only moved his lips, but with his mind, hands, eyes, beating his breast and bending his knees, he showed the desire of the inner man."[38] "He once invited a fellow clerk to pray with him. As they stood before the steps of the altar singing the psalms of David, whenever they uttered the name of God, Gilbert prostrated himself; the clerk imitated him, and was so weary that he swore he would never pray with him again." Another time a Bishop was staying with Alexander, and slept in the same room with Gilbert and his host. Lying awake, by the light of a torch the Bishop saw the shadow of a man moving on the wall; presently he recognised Gilbert standing in prayer by his bed. In the morning he asked Alexander why he kept "a dancer" in his room to terrify his guests.

Alexander compelled Gilbert to become a priest much against his will,[39] and he appointed him to hear confessions

[35] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 280, Rolls Series.

[36] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. vii., "Qualiter conversatus est in Curia Alexandri Episcopi."

[37] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. vii., viii., "Quod primo Clericus ordinatus est."

[38] *Cf.* note 36.

[39] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. viii., "Quod Presbyter invitus factus est."

in the see of Lincoln.[40] Not long afterwards the Bishop offered him an important archdeaconry, which Gilbert promptly refused, saying that he knew no quicker nor more ready way to destruction: "The service of the church is good and useful to him who serves her well; there are but few who hear causes for the sake of souls, but many for money."[41] For himself Gilbert had solved the problem so often debated among clerks, "An possit archidiaconus salvus esse":[42] he would rather have a few souls committed to his charge and care for them, than have many and fail in his duty.

Before 1131[43] Alexander suffered him to return to Sempringham. As his father was dead, he now held his lands in Sempringham, besides the two churches. "There were at that time, when Henry I. was king in England, (as he said in the book which he wrote about the building of monasteries,) certain secular maidens in Sempringham whose minds had received the word of God, which he had so often ministered unto them. They were now white to harvest . . . and longed to cling without hindrance to their heavenly bridegroom. . . . When Gilbert failed to find men who wished to live the strict life for God, he deemed it worthy to give his wealth to the use of such as were poor in spirit, and might claim for him and others the Kingdom of Heaven."[44] "The fruit of the virgins was an hundredfold." With the help and advice of Alexander, he

[40] "The first general institution of a penitentiary priest was at the fourth Lateran Council, 1215, but it appears from Thomassin that particular dioceses in earlier times had their penitentiaries" (Newman, "Lives of the English Saints," vol. iii. p. 31, note).

[41] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. viii., "Qualiter sprevit Divitias Seculi."

[42] Stubbs, "Lectures on Medieval and Modern History," p. 160. The archdeacons were often appointed by family interest when very young, and frequently fell into great temptations.

[43] "1131. Exordium ordinis Sempingham" (Annales de Derley, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xcvii.).

[44] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. ix., "De Exordio Ordinis de Sempingham, et Inclusione Monialium"; p. xxix, "De Inicio Monialium, et Sororum, et Fratrum, et Victu et Labore eorum."

built a dwelling and cloister for them against the north wall of his church of S. Andrew, and there shut up the seven maidens "away from the noise of the world and out of the sight of men, since it is easy for tender maidens to be tempted by the wiles of the serpent." The gate of the cloister was never opened except when Gilbert went in to speak with them; he took the key with him wherever he went. "That they might please the heavenly bridegroom," he gave them "a rule of holiness," enjoining upon them "chastity, humility, obedience, and charity." This was the humble beginning of the Order of Sempringham.

Gilbert arranged that his nuns should receive their daily necessaries through a window from some poor village girls whom he had chosen. His Cistercian friend, William, the first Abbot of Rievaulx, who came to visit him, warned him that his nuns ought not to speak with secular women, "who wandered whither they pleased," and who, by their gossip, might rekindle in the nuns an interest in the world which they had renounced.[45] Seeing the Cistercian lay-brothers who accompanied William of Rievaulx, Gilbert conceived the idea of converting the rough serving maidens into lay-sisters, with a dress and rule of their own. "Thus it came about . . . that the serving maidens asked that a dress might be given them with a life of religion, that they might minister to the handmaids of Christ in a poor but honourable life." Gilbert rejoiced greatly; but he knew that the ignorant, simple peasant girls might promise what they neither understood nor could perform. "The spirit of neophytes must be proved," said his biographer, "that Satan may not change himself into an angel of light, that the wolf may not put on sheepskin, the sparrow the feathers of the hawk, the rustic ass the limbs of a lion." Gilbert told them how they must lead a life of poverty and perpetual labour, despising the world and all its pleasures, and bade them wait for a year that their desire might grow with the delay. "Since," in

[45] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. x., "Vocatio Sororum laicarum."

the words of his biographer, "without the help of man the woman's care availeth little," Gilbert took men as lay-brothers to do the harder out-of-door work, giving them too a dress and a rule of humility, peacefulness, and obedience.[47] Some of these were his own parishioners whom he had supported from their childhood, others were fugitive villeins who had freed themselves by taking vows of religion; others again were the poor and the outcast, for "he went out into the streets and lanes of the city and compelled them to come in." The difficulty of controlling these rude ignorant peasants afterwards led to a great crisis in the history of the Order.

To Gilbert's surprise his little community at Sempringham attracted much attention.[48] About 1139 Gilbert de Gant, his feudal lord, granted him three carucates of land in Sempringham to build a priory, in the honour of the Virgin, near the church.[49] Several barons offered him lands, but at first he was unwilling to accept them. However, he built eleven monasteries before the death of Stephen.[50]

When Gilbert saw "the children of God growing daily in number," he shrank from the responsibility of ruling them.[51] In his perplexity he bethought him of his Cistercian friends, whom he deemed more religious than the Benedictines, because they were a new Order with a stricter Rule. He resolved to ask them to take charge of his monasteries. In 1147[52] he set out for Citeaux, probably

[47] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. x., "Conversio laicorum Fratrum."

[48] Ibid., "Propagatio Monasteriorum."

[49] Ibid., vi. 2, p. 947. *Cf.* the series of charters granted "to God, S. Mary, and the nuns of Sempringham," edited by Major Poynton, published in the *Genealogist*, vols. xv. and xvi. [50] *Cf.* Chapter II., p. 33.

[51] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xi., "Quod adiit Papam Eugenium."

[52] The date is fixed by the presence of Eugenius III. He was at Citeaux on September 17, 1147. Baronius, ed. Pagi, vol. xix. p. 4. He was still there on September 22nd, and he was at Auxerre on September 25th. Mas Latrie, "Trésor de Chronologie," p. 1099. If Gilbert was at Clairvaux in April, 1148, which is probable, he there saw Eugenius III. again, April 24th to 26th. Eugenius III. was not at Citeaux in 1148, for he left France in June.

with some of the English Abbots, to be present at the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order, which met yearly in September.[53] He was disappointed in his object, for the Abbots decided that they might not rule over those of another Order, especially one of women.[54] Yet his journey was very fruitful, for at Citeaux he met Bernard of Clairvaux,[55] whose wonderful influence had insured the success of the Cistercian Order, when its fortunes were at their lowest ebb. Though but a simple abbot, Bernard of Clairvaux had healed the schism in the papacy, triumphed alike over the heretic Abelard, and the demagogue Arnold of Brescia, and at Christmas, 1147, he compelled the Emperor, Conrad III., to go on the second Crusade with Louis VII. of France. He invited Gilbert to stay with him at Clairvaux, the desolate "Valley of Wormwood" in Champagne, which the Cistercians had changed into the "Happy Valley." There Bernard helped Gilbert to draw up the Institutes of the Order of Sempringham.[56]

Eugenius III., the friend of Bernard, who had been drawn from the peaceful cloister at Pisa to fill the chair of S. Peter, was also present at the Chapter of Citeaux in 1147, taking his former place as a simple abbot among the others. Though Gilbert pleaded his unfitness, Eugenius conferred on him the care of his Order.[57] So greatly did he love him, that he lamented he had not known him sooner, for he would have made him Archbishop of York

[53] The General Chapter met every year in September, and lasted five days. The Abbots from Spain came every two years; those from Ireland, Scotland, Sicily, and Portugal every four years; from Norway every five; from Syria and Palestine every seven. Other Abbots came every year. "Cistercian Statutes," ed. Fowler, pp. 46, 47.

[54] *Cf.* note 51.

[55] Milman, "History of Latin Christianity," vol. iv. p. 301, ed. 1883.

[56] Bernard and Gilbert were described in a bull of Innocent III. as the two founders of the Order of Sempringham. Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 961.

[57] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xi., "Quod commissum est ei a Domino Papa Regimen Ordinis sui."

instead of Henry Murdac, the Cistercian Abbot of Fountains, who had been the comrade and fellow-disciple of Eugenius under Bernard at Clairvaux. It was well for Gilbert, since he was far happier as Master of Sempringham than he would have been in a high position in the Church. The struggle in which Henry Murdac was engaged for several years with S. William of York to gain possession of the city, would have been utterly repugnant to him.[58]

Gilbert was still at Clairvaux in the middle of October, 1148, when Malachy, the famous Archbishop of Armagh, arrived there on his way to Rome.[59] Malachy presented Gilbert with an abbot's staff in token of his love; Bernard gave him a stole and a maniple as well as a staff.[60] Probably Gilbert left Clairvaux before the end of October and returned home.[61]

Soon afterwards he completed his Order by appointing learned canons to help him in the work of administration: "Men that they might protect women, learned that they might rule over others, and point out the way of salvation to men and women, in holy orders that they might serve the whole community as priests."[62] Eugenius III. confirmed the Rule of the Order, "having found no fault in it."[63]

Gilbert's biographer has given a quaint description of the Order. "It is the chariot of Aminadab, that is of a willing people, of the voluntary poor of Christ. It has two sides, one of men, another of women; four wheels, two of men clerk and lay, and two of women lettered and unlettered. Two oxen draw the chariot, the clerkly

[58] William of Newburgh, chap. xvii. (Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II., and Richard I., vol. i. pp. 55, 56), Rolls Series.

[59] "Dictionary of National Biography," vol. xxxv.

[60] *Cf.* note 57.

[61] Malachy died at Clairvaux on November 2nd. Probably the biographer would have mentioned it, if Gilbert had been still at Clairvaux.

[62] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xii., "Ordinatio Canonicorum."

[63] Ibid., p. xiii., "De Scriptis."

and monastic discipline of the blessed Augustine and the holy Benedict. Father Gilbert guides the chariot over places rough and smooth, over the heights and in the depths. The way by which they go is narrow, but the path is eternal life."[64]

Gilbert devoted himself wholly to the care of his Order. He loved all his churches alike, and was equally zealous for the welfare of each one of them.[65] His own rule of life was very strict. He rode from one house to another, attended only by a lay-brother and one or two of his canons. He never chattered by the way, but sang psalms or prayed, and he gave alms to all who asked of him. When he stayed at any monastery he did not eat the bread of idleness, but laboured with his hands: sometimes he copied books, sometimes he made the rude monastic furniture, or he helped in the work of building. He was cheerful and spoke pleasantly to all. He ate so little that all wondered how he lived, for he abstained almost entirely from meat, and even from fish all through Lent. He rarely sat at a table, and always kept a dish for God by him into which he put most of his food to be given to the poor. The vessels, which he used, were made of wood or earthenware, the spoons of horn. At night he sat up praying on his couch until sleep overpowered him; he never rested in the day, yet "he laboured more than all." He wore a dark-grey tunic all the year, and scorned a pelisse in winter.

Gilbert's biographer has recorded many miracles which were attributed to him.[66] Albinus,[67] his faithful chaplain, who accompanied him so long and knew all his acts, told how Gilbert was tortured by ague, and when he urged him to try and shake it off, Gilbert asked him if he would bear

[64] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xiii., "Commendatio Ordinis."

[65] *Et seq.*, Ibid., p. xiv., "Qualiter se habuit in Prælatione," p. xv., "De Asperitate Vitæ ejus."

[66] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. ff. 74–83, 140ᵛ–168.

[67] Ibid., f. 75.

it for him. Albinus consented. On the morrow, at the hour when the fever came, Albinus suffered instead of Gilbert, that he might learn "how control over diseases lies not in the skill of man but in the power of God." Another time, when Albinus lay sick with fever at Sempringham, and could not go with Gilbert on his wonted rounds to the monasteries, he waited for him at Newstead. Weary of the delay, Gilbert sent to him, bidding him have the fever no more and come to him as quickly as possible. On the morrow when the signs of the daily attack manifested themselves, full of faith, Albinus cried aloud to the disease, "Why dost thou assault me? Hath not the Master forbidden thee to approach me again? In the Name of the Lord, and in obedience to the Master, I forbid thee to dare to harass me further." Making the sign of the cross he fell into a sweet sleep, nor from that day to his death did the fever ever molest him again. Roger, Prior of Malton,[58] who was with him, told how once when he came to the Humber after visiting the monasteries on the other side, the south wind blew and the sea was so rough that he could not cross. Waiting for calm weather at Hessleskew Grange, and chafing at the delay on account of his care for the churches, he bade all say the Lord's Prayer, then he ordered the horses, and as they reached the shore the storm ceased. So great was the confidence of the sailors in him that they set out at his command, a fair north wind filled the sails, and they speedily gained the other shore. Immediately after the storm returned in its former violence. On another occasion, when he was on some business of his Order in London, a fire broke out close by his lodging; all fled and entreated him to follow them.[59] He alone remained praying in the lodging, and though the fire devoured all the houses around and part of his house, it passed by the room in which he was.

In 1164 the Gilbertines helped Becket to escape from

[58] MS. Cotton. Cleopatra B. 1. f. 80v. [59] Ibid., f. 81.

England.[70] The Archbishop was summoned before the King's Council at Northampton in October to answer the complaint of John the Marshall, and also certain charges about money which he had received as chancellor.[71] On October 13th he came from the Monastery of S. Andrew to Northampton Castle, and entered the hall bearing his cross, with only one clerk in attendance. The Archbishop of York, the Bishops of London, Lincoln, Worcester, and others counselled him to yield to Henry. Messengers were sent to Becket from the King, who sat in an inner hall. The Archbishop remained firm. He declined to hear his judgment, and at last left the hall amid tumult and insults. He returned to the Monastery of S. Andrew, in which he gave a great feast to the poor. However, he believed his life to be in danger and resolved on flight. That night, before the guards were set, he escaped on horseback from the north gate of the town. A Gilbertine brother, who was with him at Northampton, guided him northwards to Lincoln, prudently taking unfrequented paths that they might escape the pursuers.[72] Rain fell in torrents all night. The Archbishop's cloak became so wet that he could not bear the weight of it, and it was cut shorter twice before daybreak.[73] At last they reached Grantham, twenty-five miles from Northampton, and after a short sleep set out for Lincoln, twenty-five miles away.[74] There they lodged in the house of a fuller, by name James, who was a friend of the Gilbertines.[75] Becket now disguised himself by putting on the tunic and rough shoes of a lay-brother, and bade his companions call him not Thomas, but Christian.[76] At dusk, on the second day of the Archbishop's flight, they took a

[70] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xvii., "De Constantia ejus."

[71] "Vita S. Thomæ, Auctore Anonymo I." "Materials for the History of Thomas Becket," vol. iv., pp. 44–55, Rolls Series.

[72] Herbert of Boseham, "Materials for the History of Thomas Becket," vol. iii. pp. 323–325, Rolls Series.

[73] *Cf.* note 71, p. 54.

[74] *Cf.* note 72.

[75] *Cf.* note 71, p. 54; note 72, p. 324.

[76] *Cf.* note 71, p. 55.

boat and went down the Witham all night, until they reached a lonely hermitage, belonging to Sempringham, called Hoyland-in-the-fens, forty miles from Lincoln.[77] There Becket remained safely hidden for three days. It is related that one day when the brother who served him saw him eating the simple monastic fare, he could not restrain his tears, but immediately went out of the hermitage, that his grief might not disturb "the man of God."[78]

From Hoyland Becket and his companions went ten miles to Boston, and thence also by water to Haverolot, another Gilbertine house, probably Haverholme in the Sleaford river.[79] Then the Archbishop left the fens. On his way south he stayed at the Gilbertine house of Chicksand in Bedfordshire; there he met a chaplain of the Order, Gilbert by name, and ordered him to go with him.[80] Travelling by night and hiding by day, Becket at last reached the coast of Kent, and sailed from Eastry to Oye, near Gravelines, on November 2nd.[81]

Early in 1165[82] Henry's justices summoned Gilbert and his priors to Westminster to answer a charge of having sent money abroad to Becket.[83] The Order was in grave danger, for the penalty was exile. However, Gilbert said that he would rather suffer it than swear to his innocence, lest his oath should be misunderstood: as a loyal son of the Church, he would have thought it right to help the Archbishop in every way he could. While his priors were filled with terror, "thinking that some of them might take the oath, and that it was not right to leave the places of

[77] *Cf.* notes 71 and 72.

[78] Between 1170 and 1189 Ralph, son of Stephen de Hoyland, granted lands for the support of two canons, priests, to serve God and S. Mary in the chapel of S. Thomas the Martyr within the marsh of Hoyland. Cf. *Genealogist*, vol. xvi. p. 76.

[79] *Cf.* note 72. [80] *Cf.* note 71, p. 55. [81] *Cf.* note 72.

[82] Henry was in Normandy from the middle of February until May 15th. Eyton, "Itinerary of Henry II.," p. 77.

[83] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xvii., "De Constantia ejus."

their professions for such a cause," Gilbert "forgot all earthly fear." He bought some toys from a boy in the court to amuse his companions, showing them how little the cause of their sadness oppressed him; he jested with them in their lodging, "for he counted it all joy to have fallen into divers tribulations." On the last day, when they expected to hear that they must all suffer exile without delay, messengers arrived from Henry to the hesitating judges to say that he would judge the case himself on his return from Normandy, and in the meantime Gilbert and his priors might go in peace. Then he confessed his innocence, and explained his silence to the judges, who all wondered at his firmness.

Henry II. revered and loved the saintly Master of Sempringham: "he would not suffer Gilbert to come to the court on the business of his Order, and did not blush to go to his lodging with his nobles. There he humbly received his blessing, and did not refuse to listen to his counsels about salvation. Queen Eleanor, too, rejoiced that her sons were blessed by Gilbert." [84]

Henry was fighting against Richard and John in Normandy, when he heard the news of Gilbert's death in February 1189. He sighed deeply, and said "Truly I knew that he had left this earth, for all these evils have come upon me because he is dead." He would not be comforted until some of his nobles told him that Gilbert could intercede better for him in heaven than on earth.[85]

About 1170,[86] when Gilbert was more than eighty years old, the great trouble of the rebellion of the lay-brothers came upon him.[87] In the Cistercian Order the monks were as numerous as the lay-brothers and shared their work, but Gilbert's few learned brothers could not cope with their resolute resistance. The lay-brothers complained of the

[84] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxi, "De Magnificentia ejus." [85] Ibid.

[86] Becket died December 29, 1170. Henry of Blois died August 9, 1171.

[87] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xviii., xix., "Vexatio falsorum fratrum."

harshness of the Rule, and demanded more food with less work. Gilbert himself has told the story of the rebellion: "The leaders in this dissension and discord were two lay-brothers to whom, in preference to others, I had intrusted the care of all our houses. With them were associated two others. One of these I received when he was almost a beggar, seeking his living by weaving. The other, Ogger the Smith by name, I received as a boy before he was a smith, and with him his three brothers, unskilled in any trade, his poverty-stricken father who was all but worn out, his aged mother, and her two beggar daughters who had long been ill. I allowed Ogger and one of his brothers to be taught the trade of a smith in our Order, the other two brothers that of a carpenter. These and other brothers rose up against me and our canons. God knows that they lied, and they spread evil reports of us in many places."[88]

Ogger and Gerard rode about the country on their stolen palfreys, making Gilbert and his canons "the common talk" everywhere. Gilbert remained firm. He excommunicated the chief offenders, and required an oath from the others that they would keep their vows. Ogger and Gerard, grown rich by plunder, set out for Rome. They slandered Gilbert to Alexander III., who was deceived by them and bade Gilbert take them back into the Order, for he had overstepped his powers in asking for a second profession.[89] All seemed against him. He was summoned from one court to another to do right to the lay-brothers.[90]

Becket, in his exile, was likewise deceived by the reports of the false brethren, for, as he wrote, the scandals were everywhere spread abroad, and he sent stern letters to Gilbert.[91] He remonstrated with him because he had not

[88] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xviii., xix., "Vexatio falsorum fratrum."

[89] "Epistolæ S. Thomæ." "Materials for the History of Thomas Becket," vol. v. p. 259.

[90] *Cf.* note 87.

[91] *Cf.* note 89, pp. 259–261.

yet received the lay-brothers back into the Order, reminding him that disobedience to the Pope's commands was as "the sin of idolatry," and that the Lord said "Woe unto him by whom offences come." The Lord, Gilbert, and the whole Order knew how he had ever loved and protected them before all other Orders, and therefore he was the more disturbed when the news of such great scandals reached his ears. The Pope had intrusted the correction of the Order to him, and therefore, under sentence of anathema, he bade Gilbert read the Pope's letters and his own to the whole Order, and labour to immediately remove those scandals from the Church.

Henry II., several of the Bishops, and Cardinal Hugh, the papal legate, took up Gilbert's cause, and they wrote to Alexander III. on his behalf.[92] William, Bishop of Norwich, was a most strenuous defender of Gilbert. He told the Pope how, according to his mandate, though the Bishop of Winchester was too ill to accompany him, he had gone with "certain religious" to hear the cause. Gilbert denied that he had forced the lay-brothers to make a second profession contrary to the first, adding that he had long absolved them from the second oath in the presence of the Bishop of Lincoln. He had willingly agreed to take back the lay-brothers. He had never received the Pope's letters, nor had he excommunicated the bearer. For the future he had consented that only the two or three canons appointed to celebrate Mass should go to the nuns' church, and the lay-brothers should use the canons' oratory.[93] In a second letter William pleaded his personal knowledge of Gilbert's holiness and of the innocence of nuns and canons, urging that, though Norwich was not far distant from Sempringham, no breath of scandal had ever reached him.[94] To Gilbert, William wrote "as to his other self," assuring him of his love, and trust in him.[95]

Roger, Archbishop of York, said that he had always heard

[92] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. ff. 89^{v}–100^{v}.

[93] Ibid., f. 89^{v}. [94] Ibid., f. 92. [95] Ibid., f. 94^{v}.

that the Gilbertine houses in his diocese were "honestly and religiously ruled." The advocates who had given lands to the canons and nuns, would not permit them to be removed from each other, but would take away their possessions on the slightest pretext.[96] In another letter the Archbishop and Hugh de Puiset, Bishop of Durham, testified to their own knowledge of Malton Priory.[97] Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, the Prior of Bridlington, and Cardinal Hugh wrote to the Pope in like manner.[98]

In a curt and emphatic note to Alexander III., Henry II. said, that if the Order were changed, he would take away the "domains and possessions" granted to it by himself and his nobles: on the other hand, if the Pope ordered its institutions to be kept in their first rigour, he would do all in his power to maintain it, and would ever hold it in great reverence and honour.[99]

Alexander was convinced "by these testimonies and prayers" that he had been deceived by Ogger and Gerard.[100] He granted to Gilbert and his successors, "that no one might add to, correct or change their religion, laws, or reasonable institutions without the consent of the greater and wiser part of the Order." He further conceded many other privileges and immunities which were confirmed by his successors, and will be fully discussed in a later chapter.[101]

When the lay-brothers found that they had utterly failed to move Gilbert by violence, they came to ask for pardon, and humbly entreated him to relax the Rule slightly for them.[102] Gilbert received them back "with the kiss of peace," and promised to do so, with the Pope's authority. Ogger alone, "the hammer of Gilbert," con-

[96] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 95ᵛ. [97] Ibid., f. 96.
[98] Ibid., ff. 93ᵛ, 97. [99] Ibid., f. 92ᵛ.
[100] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xx., "Indulgentia Domini Papæ."
[101] *Cf.* Chapter V.
[102] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, xix., "Vexatio falsorum fratrum."

tinued in wickedness all his life. The changes in the dress and food of the lay-brothers were solemnly made about 1187, in the presence of Hugh of Avalon, Bishop of Lincoln, with the consent of the General Chapter of Sempringham.[103]

Advancing years induced Gilbert to hand over the care of the churches to Roger, Prior of Malton,[104] one of the first canons of Sempringham, whom he had appointed his successor by the wish of the whole Order.[105] From him Gilbert received the canon's habit at Bullington.[106] Though Master of Sempringham, he only formally entered the Order at the urgent request of its members, who feared that on his death some stranger might be put in his place by force, "if he, to whom they had first made their profession, were not of their number." Gilbert had[107] previously refrained that he might not be branded with arrogance for swearing to live according to the rule, which he had himself drawn up: its confirmation by the successors of S. Peter persuaded him to yield. He continued to go on his rounds until his death, though, as he could no longer ride, he was carried in a litter.[108] He had lost his sight from much weeping and watching, as well as from exposure to wind and dust.[109] On the road, at table, and at night he abated none of his former austerities.[110] He would never eat in the dorter, though tired out; even if the frater was far distant, and he was entreated to spare himself he would be at table with the others.[111] He never slept in a retired place.[112]

Gilbert died when he was more than a hundred years old. On Christmas night, 1188, he received extreme

[103] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 83.
[104] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xx., "Qualis erat in Senio."
[105] Ibid., p. xvii., "Quod suscepit Habitum Canonici."
[106] Ibid. [107] Ibid., p. xvi.
[108] Ibid., p. xx., "Qualis erat in Senio."
[109] Ibid., "Item alia Temptatio." [110] *Cf.* note 108.
[111] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxi., "De Abstinentia ejus."
[112] Ibid., p. xv., "De Asperitate Vitæ ejus."

unction at the monastery of Newstead-on-Ancholme.[113] His companions and chaplains carried him to Sempringham forty miles away, secretly, and as swiftly as they could. They dared not follow the straight road, lest Gilbert should be detained on the way, that his bones might rest in some other church or monastery. The Priors of all his churches came to Sempringham to receive his blessing. On the last day, with only his successor at his side, he lay in a stupor seeing no one, hearing no one: at last he said, "He hath dispersed, He hath given to the poor: this is thy duty for the future." On the next morning, Saturday, February 4th, he died about the hour of Matins. Gilbert's biographer could not find words to express the grief of the Order. "He gathered us together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing." "Kings and princes honoured him, pontiffs and prelates received him with devotion, kinsmen and strangers loved him, all the people revered him as a saint of God. We have seen bishops on their knees asking for his blessing, and coming from a far distance seeking fragments of his clothing."[114] He was buried on the following Tuesday, "in the presence of abbots, of priors of his own and other monasteries, of many of the religious both men and women, of many of the noble and rich of the world, and of a countless multitude of the people.[115] The tomb was placed between the altars of S. Mary and S. Andrew in the priory church of S. Mary, on either side of the wall which divided the men from the women, so that all alike might see him.

William of Newburgh,[116] Roger of Hoveden,[117] and others recorded his death. He had built thirteen monasteries for the Order of Sempringham, nine for men and women together, four for canons only. Besides these he had built

[113] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxii., "De Infirmitate quâ obiit."

[114] Ibid. p. xxi., "De Magnificentia ejus."

[115] Ibid., p. xxiv., "De Sepultura ejus."

[116] William of Newburgh, Book I., chapter xvi.; Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II., Richard I., vol. i. p. 54, Rolls Series.

[117] Roger de Hoveden, Chronica, vol. ii. p. 354, Rolls Series.

"hostels for the poor and the sick, the weary and the leper, the widow and the orphan."[118] In a short account of him and his work, William of Newburgh wrote: "In my judgement, in ruling women, he holds the palm among all whom we have known." Even Walter Mapes, that bitter opponent of monks, who always excepted Jews and Cistercians from his oath to do justice to all men when he went on circuit,[119] had nothing unfavourable to say of Gilbert when he mentioned him in "De Nugis Curialium."[120]

A man so well known as Gilbert was not easily forgotten. It was reported that many miracles of healing were worked at his tomb.[121] Eleven years after his death, Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, judged that Gilbert was worthy to be canonised, and sent the Abbots of the Lincolnshire houses of Swineshead, Bourn, and Croxton to make inquisition about him and his miracles.[122] King John and some of his nobles came to see the tomb of Gilbert on January 9, 1201. The Abbots arrived at Sempringham on the same day, and afterwards satisfied themselves by sworn inquisition as to the truth of the miracles. King John, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London, Norwich, Bangor, and Ely, the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, the three Abbots and many others, sent letters to Innocent III. asking for the canonisation of Gilbert of Sempringham.[123] Master Roger and the Chapter of Sempringham told how he built many monasteries and cared for the poor, how at his tomb the lame walked, the dumb spake, the deaf heard. They prayed Innocent "to number Gilbert among the saints, to set his light upon a candlestick, to dig up this precious pearl from under the muddy soil where it lies."[124] Two of the canons set out for the

[118] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xiv.
[119] Giraldus Cambrensis, vol. iv. p. 219, Rolls Series.
[120] "De Nugis Curialium," p. 59, Camden Society.
[121] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. ff. 140^{v}–168.
[122] *Et seq.*, Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxv., "Incipit Canonizatio beati Gilberti."
[123] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. ff. 117–132^{v}. [124] Ibid., f. 118.

Curia with all these testimonies: though their journey was in the great heat of the summer, they escaped the fatal pestilence of the Campagna, and were unmolested by the robbers who infested the roads.[125] Innocent III. received them kindly,[126] and gave them letters for the Archbishop and others enjoining a three days' fast on the whole Order, and a further inquisition into the life and miracles of Gilbert.[127] The Archbishop fixed September 26, 1201 for the inquisition, and the fast for that day and the two preceding it. He went himself to hold it with the Bishops of Ely, Bath, and Bangor, the Abbots of Bury and of Bourn. Gilbert's biographer stated that many miracles were brought to light which had escaped notice before.[128] As Master Roger laboured to bring together all who might bear witness to their cures, Gilbert appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Why art thou so careful about seeking many miracles? Be not so, for it is not needful": "whence," as Gilbert's biographer said, "he hoped that the canonisation would be easily obtained."[129] After some delay because they feared the difficulties of the journey,[130] five canons and six men, who had been cured of their infirmities by Gilbert, set out to carry the sealed testimony to the Pope,[131] with a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury stating that all alike bore witness to Gilbert's holy and unspotted life. "His abstinence was wonderful, his chastity conspicuous, his prayers watchful and devout, his care for his flock eager and discreet. Meditation filled up his leisure hours, action and contemplation alternating with each other like the angels ascending and descending Jacob's ladder. An idle word rarely escaped his lips."[132] Though oft "in perils of robbers," guided by the Lord and cheered by Gilbert in their dreams,[133] they reached Rome safely on December 31st,

[125] *Et seq,. cf.* note 122.
[126] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 130ᵛ.
[127] *Et seq., cf.* note 122.
[128] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 107.
[129] Ibid., f. 107.
[130] Ibid., f. 107ᵛ.
[131] *Cf.* note 122.
[132] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 131.
[133] Ibid., f. 108ᵛ.

and Anagni, where Innocent then was, on January 2nd.[134] When a few of the miracles had been read in the Curia, some of the cardinals said that these alone sufficed, others that they were already more than enough. On the evening of the ninth day after the coming of the canons, while Innocent still hesitated, a vision came to him which was interpreted by Reiner, a hermit, as the bidding of the Lord to number Gilbert among the saints. On January 11th, in the presence of a great number of the clergy and people, Innocent made a long speech on the merits of Gilbert, and decreed his canonisation. After the return of the canons, the Archbishop wrote to the bishops commanding them to keep the Feast of S. Gilbert on February 4th. They might be present, if they chose, on the Sunday after the Feast of S. James, when he had promised the Order to elevate the body of the Confessor with honour and due reverence.[135] He bade them make it known through their dioceses that all might come who would, and accordingly the archdeacons sent out letters to the people inviting them to be present.[136] The translation took place on October 13, 1202, before many nobles and prelates and a great multitude of the people.[137] To all who should come to the shrine of S. Gilbert, the Archbishop relaxed forty days of penance and his bishops a hundred and ten days; moreover they were granted a share in the prayers and blessings of all who served in the churches of Sempringham and in the church of Canterbury for ever.[138]

Gilbert wrote this letter to the Canons of Malton at some time in the last year of his life[139]: "My dear sons,—While God gave me power, whenever I came to visit you, I was ever wont to invite and draw you to the Divine love so far as I could and knew how. Would that virtue

[134] *Et seq,. cf.* note 122.

[135] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 137[v]. [136] Ibid., f. 139.

[137] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxvii., "De Translatione S. Gileberti Confessoris."

[138] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 140.

[139] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxii., "De Infirmitate quâ obiit."

followed on my care for you! But now I am almost destitute of bodily strength, and by putting off this robe of the flesh a way opens up for me to depart hence from life, which has long been bitter and tedious to me. And now since I cannot speak to you with my voice, by this letter I cease not to admonish you, for the love of God and for the safety of your souls, to watch more diligently even than hitherto, to repress vice, to exalt justice, to observe the institutions and traditions of your Order the more wakefully and strictly since you are free from the occupations with which the lay-brothers busy themselves, and you have the opportunity of exercising the rigour of the Order, that you may check the insolence of any delinquents. For this I have specially gathered you together, that our Order may be rightly ruled, protected, and exalted by the rigour of your religion. If you think my care for you has been of use to you, do not refuse to consider the hire of my labour, but entreat the clemency of the Lord with your most fervent prayers that He enter not into judgment with me, but by His great sweetness may wipe away my sins and grant me everlasting rest. To you whom I leave behind me, I give the peace and mercy of God, His blessing and my own. By the authority granted me by Him, as far as I may, I absolve all who love our Order and defend it from all accusations which any have brought against its institutions through ignorance or infirmity, negligence or contempt. Let those who imagine mischief and strife against our congregation, know that my absolution cannot avail them, since unless they repent before the Lord and make worthy satisfaction, they are accursed. None of you do I think guilty of this charge, but I trust in you all that you will be more diligent than formerly in performing all things for the welfare of your souls, with the help of the Saviour; that my joy in your society may increase before the Lord, and that He Himself may be glad whose kingdom and power abide for ever and ever. Farewell." [140]

[140] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1. f. 100v.

II.

THE FOUNDING OF THE MONASTERIES.

"NOW the time had come," wrote Gilbert's biographer, "that the beloved should go out with his beloved into the field of the world, that they should dwell in the towns and cities of the peoples. . . . Many rich and noble earls and barons, seeing and approving the work which God had begun, and the good which followed, offered Gilbert farms, estates, and other possessions, and many monasteries began to be built under his guidance in many regions. Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, began the work, and Henry II., the famous King of the English, finished it. The man of God received all these things with fear and trembling and some compulsion, many he refused and utterly despised, for he ever loved honourable poverty." [1]

Alexander [2] the Magnificent was a mighty builder, even among the Normans. He set up strong castles at Newark, Banbury, and Sleaford, on the plea that he needed them for the protection of his see. The Count of Mellun and many other nobles, who supported Stephen, were jealous of the power of the Bishops of Salisbury, Lincoln, and Ely. They told Stephen that the Bishops "had built their castles . . . not that they might give this kingdom to the King, but that they might take away the royal dignity from him, and lie in wait for his crown." [3] Thus they prevailed on

[1] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. x.
[2] "Dictionary of National Biography," vol. i.
[3] "Gesta Stephani Regis Anglorum," p. 46, Rolls Series.

him "to touch the Lord's Anointed." When the Bishops came to Oxford on June 24, 1139, to be present at the royal court, their followers were attacked by the men of the Count of Mellun. Armed men were sent forthwith to arrest the Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln in their lodging, on the charge of breaking the King's peace. Until Stephen had gained possession of the castles of Devizes and Sherborne, belonging to the Bishop of Salisbury, Alexander was kept "in imprisonment"[4] at Oxford. Then the King took him to Newark, "at which the Bishop had built a fair castle in a very pleasant place on the Trent."[5] "He assured him, with an oath, that he should lack all food until the castle was surrendered. By tears and prayers the Bishop with difficulty prevailed on his men to hand over to others the custody of the castle, which they held in his right."[6] The castle of Sleaford was surrendered in the same way.

Alexander retired to his palace over the Eastgate at Lincoln to await the issue of events. Perhaps he reflected on the warning which S. Bernard of Clairvaux had given him ten years before. "We presume to exhort you in charity, that you look not on the passing glory of a tottering world, and lose the glory which shall endure; that you love not your possessions more than yourself, and thus lose yourself and your possessions; that flattering present prosperity hide not its end from you, and adversity without end succeed; . . . that you think not that death is far off, and it take you unawares; and while you think life is long, swiftly it deserts you, though you know not of it, as it is written: 'When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.'"[7] "Since the building of castles seemed but little in accord with the episcopal character," wrote William of Newburgh, "to take away the odium of that building, and as it were to expiate

[4] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 266, Rolls Series. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid.
[7] S. Bernardi Epistolæ, ed. Migne, Patrologia, vol. clxxxii. p. 170, "circa 1129."

the stain, he built as many monasteries as castles, and filled them with the religious."[8] However, Giraldus Cambrensis noted that "he built four monasteries out of the lands and rents of his Church, robbing one altar to deck others."[9]

In 1137 Alexander had offered Haverholme, a marshy island in the river near Sleaford, to the Abbot of Fountains for an abbey of the Cistercian order. "The Abbot accepted the gift," wrote a monk of Fountains, "and relying on the help of the Lord, sent brothers to the place to raise up buildings. On February 5, 1139, a band of monks was sent forth from Fountains to Haverholme under Abbot Gervase. He was one of the first fathers who went forth from the monastery at York, and planted this vine in the sweat of his brow. The place of their habitation displeased the monks who were sent to Haverholme, and they received from the Bishop in exchange a place which they named Louth Park."[10] It is impossible to say why the monks from Fountains refused to stay at Haverholme. It could not have been so unfavourable as that wild valley in Skeldale, to which the twelve founders of Fountains fled to escape from the lax Rule of the Benedictine Abbey of S. Mary at York. "Neither the rigour of winter, nor the horror of desolation, nor the want of all earthly goods turned them from their purpose, nor hindered them in their undertaking. There was no money in their purses, no corn stored up in barns, nothing for their daily food except what the Bishop (Thurstan, Archbishop of York) generously gave them at times. There was no house to dwell in, no shade to rest under, no protection against the inclement winter, except so far as overhanging rocks served for it."[11]

In 1139 Alexander gave Haverholme to Gilbert of Sempringham, his former confessor, "who had come to

[8] William of Newburgh, Book I. chapter vi. vol. i. p. 37, Rolls Series. [9] Giraldus Cambrensis, vol. vii. p. 33, Roll Series.
[10] Monasticon, v. p. 299. [11] Ibid., p. 296.

imitate the life of the Bishop, but was made an example of justice to him, and from a disciple became a master."[12] "The blessed God and our Lord Jesus Christ, who has opened the eyes of His mercy upon us," wrote Alexander, "has lighted up the eyes of our mind, and inclined our heart to the necessity of His handmaids, the faithful nuns, of wonderful religion, who serve Christ the Lord in love, under the charge and teaching of Gilbert, priest. Seizing on the narrow life, the strict life, the life of the monks of the Cistercian religion, so far as the weakness of their sex permits, they strive to keep it, and they do keep it. Since they have not a fitting place for their religion, by the inspiration of the grace of God, we have given them one suitable to their way of life. For we have given them the island once called Haverholme, which is now named the island of S. Mary . . . with all things which pertain unto it; in meadow and in land which is fit for cultivation; in marsh, in waters, and in other things, as far as the bounds of the island, with two mills, free and quit from all human and secular service, in everlasting possession. . . . This favour we have shown to the handmaids of Christ, for the consolation and help of our mother church (of Lincoln), for ourselves and our friends, for the soul of King Henry, and of my uncle Roger, who was Bishop of Salisbury; and for the souls of my father and my mother and my dead friends. Be ye mindful of our dearest in your prayers, that the Lord may have mercy on you. Amen."[13]

The nuns of Haverholme had a hard struggle in the early years. Simon Tushet, their "brother in Christ," "had compassion on their good life, and fearing that they would lack the wherewithall to live . . . in the year of the battle between King Stephen and Earl Ranulf of Chester," 1140, he granted them lands in the township of Ashby.[14]

[12] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. viii.
[13] Ibid., p. 948.
[14] S.C. MS. 4937, f. 110, Brit. Mus.

Henry II.,[15] Roger Mowbray,[16] and Roger de Lacy,[17] Constable of Chester, were among the later benefactors of Haverholme.

Probably Gilbert built no more houses until after his return from Citeaux in 1148, when he added canons to his Order. Seven of the foundation charters of the other nine houses of Stephen's reign were granted "to the nuns and their brothers, clerk and lay," two to canons only.

The Rule provided that twelve canons, with a Prior as thirteenth, should be sent to a new house, each canon receiving clothes to last for two years from his Prior. They might not stay unless the place had the needful books and buildings. The books were the Missal, Rule, Book of Uses, Psalter, Hymnary, Books of Collects, Antiphons, and Responses; the buildings were Oratory, Frater, Dorter, Guest Hostel, and other needful places.[18] As no double house might have less than seven canons nor more than thirteen, unless it had great possessions,[19] the thirteen sent to a new foundation must have been taken from several houses. This was a direct contrast to the Cistercian custom; a chosen number of monks left the mother house, to which their new convent owed the obedience of a daughter house.[20]

Simon de Kyme[21] was probably induced to become a benefactor of the Order by his wife Roese, daughter of Robert, steward to Gilbert de Gant, the founder of Sempringham. "To all the faithful of Christ," wrote Simon Fitz-William, "greeting. Know that I have founded a house of religion in my park of Bullington, in the honour of God and of the blessed Virgin Mary. I have granted it to the nuns of the Order of Sempringham, and their brothers,

[15] MS. Lansdowne, 207*a*, f. 119, Brit. Mus. MS. Dodsworth, 144, f. 81, Bodleian Library.

[16] MS. Dodsworth, 144, f. 93, Bodleian Library.

[17] MS. Lansdowne, 207*a*, f. 123^{v}.

[18] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xlv. [19] Ibid., p. xlii.

[20] "Cistercian Statutes," ed. J. T. Fowler, 1890, p. 20.

[21] Dugdale, "The Baronage of England," vol. i. p. 620.

clerk and lay, serving God there. . . . I have also given them a part of my park that they may dwell there, and a part of my wood and of my lands; and, for their support, the churches of Bullington and Langton."[22] The endowment also included Hackthorn Mill, certain pastures, and lands, on which they might build granges.[23] Philip de Kyme,[24] and his wife Hahenwisa gave lands to his father's foundation for the support of seven canons,[25] and promised twenty pints of salt each year.[26] They made provision for the clothing of the convent,[27] and for the farmery of the nuns.[28] The farmery of the canons was supported out of lands in Boston, given by the Prior of Sempringham, "out of pity for their voluntary poverty."[29] For another grant of lands, the nuns promised to keep two lights burning in their church for ever, and one in the chapter by the tombs of the founder Simon and his wife Roese.[30] Alexander de Crevecœur added to Bullington the island of Tunstall, near Redburn, on which his father had founded a Gilbertine Priory in the reign of Stephen.[31]

Soon after the confirmation of the Order by Eugenius III. in 1148, Robert de Chesney,[32] Bishop of Lincoln, founded the Priory of S. Catherine, for Gilbertine canons, in a suburb[33] of Lincoln, on the south-west side of the Bar Gate. In that year he succeeded Alexander the Magnificent. He was "a man of simplicity and great humility,"[34] and, as "archdeacon of Leicester, worthy of all praise."[35] "All deemed him worthy of so great an honour," wrote

[22] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 952.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Steward to Gilbert de Gant. Cf. Dugdale, "The Baronage of England," vol. i. p. 620.
[25] Add. 6118, f. 375^{v}, Brit. Mus.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., f. 380^{v}, Brit. Mus.
[28] Ibid., f. 383, Brit. Mus.
[29] Ibid., f. 393, Brit. Mus.
[30] MS. Dodsworth, 30, f. 14, Bodleian Library.
[31] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 953.
[32] 1148–1166.
[33] The need of Robert de Chesney's foundation in the suburbs is shown in Dr. Brewer's description of a medieval town, "Monumenta Franciscana," Preface, p. xvi.
[34] Radulfus de Diceto, vol. i. p. 258, Rolls Series.
[35] Henry of Huntingdon, p. 281, Rolls Series.

Henry of Huntingdon; "king, clergy, and people assented with great joy. He received the pontifical benediction from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was received at Lincoln on the Epiphany with great rejoicing and affection by the clergy and people."[36] However, the chroniclers accused him, with some justice, of favouring the regulars at the expense of his see.[37] He endowed S. Catherine's with the prebend of Canwick, the mother church of Newark, the houses on the north and east sides of it, two manors and other lands in the same town, the church of Bracebridge, and the churches of Norton, Marton, and Newton with all their appurtenances. To the care and guardianship of the canons of S. Catherine's, he handed over the Hospital of the Holy Sepulchre at Lincoln and all the possessions of its poor and brothers.[38]

Four other Lincolnshire houses dated from the reign of Stephen. Peter De Belingey founded the small priory of Cattley on an island in the marsh of Walcote.[39] One of the de Greslei family—perhaps the son of the founder of the Cistercian Abbey of Swineshead—built Sixhills.[40] Gilbert of Ormesby founded North Ormesby with the consent of his lord, William of Albemarle.[41] In 1144 William turned the canons of Bridlington out of their house and defiled the church: "By generous and frequent alms given to the poor, and by the building of fair monasteries, he expiated his crime."[42] The name of the founder of Alvingham is unknown: he may have been William de Friston, Hugh de Scotene, or Hamelin the Dean.[43] The house received the manors of Alvingham[44] and Cockerington[45] from the de Melsa family.

[36] Henry of Huntingdon. p. 281, Rolls Series.
[37] Giraldus Cambrensis, vol. vii. pp. 34 and 198, Rolls Series.
[38] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 969. [39] Ibid., p. 967.
[40] Ibid., p. 964.
[41] Ibid., p. 963. It is also called Nun Ormesby.
[42] William of Newburgh, p. 42, Rolls Series.
[43] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 957. [44] Ibid., p. 958.
[45] Ibid., p. 958.

The two great Yorkshire houses of Watton and Malton owed their origin to the repentance of a rebel baron. Eustace FitzJohn "was one of the chiefest peers of England and of intimate familiarity with Henry I., as also a person of great wisdom and singular judgment in counsels."[46] Henry gave him vast possessions, and made him governor of Bamborough and other castles in the North. Stephen, however, feared his strength, and ordered his arrest unless he should at once surrender Bamborough Castle. Eustace fled, and joined his forces to those of David, King of Scotland. They ravaged the North, and advanced into Yorkshire as far as Northallerton, at which they were utterly defeated in the Battle of the Standard on August 22, 1138. Thurstan, Archbishop of York, persuaded Stephen to pardon Eustace FitzJohn and restore his lands to him.[47]

Eustace had some qualms of conscience. His Scotch allies had destroyed cornfields, and burnt villages and churches on their march; they had made many orphans and widows.[48] He consulted Henry Murdac, the monk of Fountains, who succeeded Thurstan as Archbishop of York. Henry[49] bade Eustace rebuild the nunnery of Watton, near Beverley.[50] In 1150 Eustace built a house for the nuns and canons of Sempringham, and endowed it with the whole township of Watton.[51] His wife Agnes, daughter of William, Constable of Chester, gave her assent to the grant, which was the portion settled on her by Eustace at their marriage.[52] Their lord, William Fossard, remitted the service of two knights due from the township, especially "for the support of thirteen canons who shall always serve the nuns, and provide for them in

[46] Dugdale, "The Baronage of England," vol. i. p. 91. *Cf.* Ælredi Rievallensis "Relatio de Standardo" (Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II., and Richard I., vol. iii. p. 191), Rolls Series.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ricardus Haugastaldensis, "De Gestis Regis Stephani," p. 159 (Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II. and Richard I., vol. iii. p. 159).

[49] 1147–1153.

[50] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 955.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

CHICKSAND PRIORY, 1900.

divine and earthly things."[53] He confirmed his gift and the charter of Eustace FitzJohn in the Church of S. John at Beverley, in the presence of the Chapter of York and of Henry Murdac.[54] Some years later William Fossard granted three carucates of land in Howald to the nuns of Watton, for the remission of his sins, instead of going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[55] Robert, Constable of Flamborough, granted lands in Hilderthorpe, "to the nuns and their brothers, clerk and lay," and "the right of collecting masts for their own ship,[56] whensoever they pleased."[57]

Eustace FitzJohn gave to the canons of Sempringham another "place fit for their religion," in 1150, the church of Malton, on the south side of the Derwent, with lands and other possessions.[58] Instead of the charge of nuns the canons of Malton had three hospital houses, at which the poor might have lodging and daily refection. One was in Wheelgate, another at Broughton about a mile to the West; a third, the gift of William de Flamville, on an island in the Derwent on the Norton side of the river.[59]

Pain de Beauchamp and Roese, his wife, founded Chicksand Priory in Bedfordshire, for canons and nuns of the Order of Sempringham. Countess Roese had first married Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, the king-maker of the Civil War.[60] Of their son, Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, "it is reported, that coming frequently to the Abbey of Walden (so founded by his

[53] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 955.

[54] Ibid. Henry Murdac fled to Beverley when the citizens of York refused to admit him as Archbishop on his return to England in 1148.

[55] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 956.

[56] "The stone" (with which the church of Watton was built) "is of a different quality from the stone which was usually imported into Holderness for ecclesiastical purposes, and abounds in ammonites and other fossils. Dr. Cox suggested that it came by sea from Whitby, and thence up the Humber, and a small tributary stream to Watton" (*Athenæum*, October 7, 1893).

[57] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 955.

[58] Ibid., p. 970.

[59] Ibid., p. 972.

[60] Round, "Geoffrey de Mandeville."

father), he advised the Prior to be content with a small church and little buildings. Which advice was thought to proceed from the insinuation of the Lady Roese, his mother, who . . . did endeavour by all her power to alienate the affection of her sons and other friends from the monks of Walden to the end they might induce them to be benefactors to Chicksand. . . . The Earl, being an elegant man of speech and of great note for his abilities in secular affairs, was by King Henry II. associated with Richard de Lucy to march against the Welsh, then near Chester; at which city falling sick, it happened that, his servants being all gone to dinner and nobody left with him, he died. Whereupon divers ancient knights then there, who had served his father, and enjoyed large possessions through his bounty, consulting together, resolved to carry his corps to Walden, there to be buried, as patron of that house. And to that end having taken out his brain and bowels, and committed them to sepulture, with honour and alms, they seasoned the rest of his body with salt, then wrapt it in a good hide, and coffined it, and so hastened towards Walden with the chariot, wherein it was carried; all his servants likewise attending thereon. But upon the way, a chaplain of the Earl called Hasculf, took out his best saddle-horse in the night, and rode to Chicksand, where the Countess Roese then resided with her nuns; and having acquainted her with the death of her son, advised her speedily to send what company she could to surprise the corps, and bring it thither, to the end that the kindred and friends of the defunct might be the rather benefactors to that house. Which design being made known to those who attended the corps, they armed themselves, and with their swords drawn, riding about it, brought it safe to Walden. And having so done, they sent a monk of that house to the Countess to acquaint her therewith: whom he found with Alice de Essex, her sister, very sorrowful for the loss of her son, and discontented towards them for preventing his interment at

Chicksand. . . . All the furniture of the Earl's chapel being taken by the Countess, the best part thereof was carried to Chicksand." [61]

Henry II. founded the house of Newstead-on-Ancholme, in the island of Rucholm, within the bounds of Cadney in Lincolnshire, in 1171 : [62] "for the safety of my soul, and of the soul of Queen Eleanor, of my heirs, and of all the faithful kings, who shall come after my days ; and for the welfare of my kingdom, for the soul of King Henry, my grandfather, and of Geoffrey, my father, and of all my ancestors." [63]

Before the death of Gilbert, Roger, son of Ranulf de Maresay, founded Mattersey Priory, on an island in the river Idle, in Nottinghamshire, for six canons of the Sempringham Order.[64]

Of the thirteen priories of later date, only Shouldham and Hitchin were founded for both sexes. It is probable that the existing houses had ample room for those women who wished to enter the Order of Sempringham. Women were afterwards admitted to S. Catherine's outside Lincoln,[65] though Robert de Chesney had not originally founded it for them. S. Gilbert's biographer stated that at his death the Order had seven hundred men and fifteen hundred sisters ; [66] probably he made a guess, for many of the medieval chroniclers were singularly inaccurate with regard to numbers. The curious concluding institute of

[61] Dugdale, "The Baronage of England," vol. i. p. 204.

[62] The acquittal of Gilbert of Sempringham of the payment of £8 10s. appears in Pipe Roll 17 H. II. for the first time. The value of the lands granted by Henry II. were valued at £8 10s. in his charter. *Cf.* Eyton, "Itinerary of Henry II.," p. 159.

[63] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 966. [64] Ibid., p. 965.

[65] Ibid., p. xcvii. William Wayte, of S. Peter's in Eastgate, Lincoln, in 1392 left 3s. 4d. to the sisters of S. Catherine's without Lincoln. John of Leeke, rector of Houghton, 1459, left "to Isabella Chawelton, sister of S. Catherine's without Lincoln, 40s., to pray for the soul of her sister Grace, and my soul." Gibbons, "Early Lincoln Wills," pp. 86 and 185. There were five lay-sisters at S. Catherine's at the Dissolution.

[66] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxix.

the Rule, which limited the numbers in each house, provided for twice as many women as men in the double monasteries. The full complement at the beginning of the reign of John was nine hundred and sixty women and five hundred and ninety-four men.[67] The limitation of the numbers of the Order was perhaps due to a fear that its members might increase faster than its possessions.

Since the beginning of the Order of Sempringham, many Cistercian nunneries, as well as houses for Augustinian and Premonstratensian canonesses had been founded, so that women, wishing to live the life of religion, had a wide choice.

On the other hand, the significant words of Walter Mapes perhaps illustrated the state of public opinion: "Nothing sinister has been heard of, but there is a fear, for often the craft of Venus penetrates the walls of Minerva."[68] The distressing scandal at Watton, related by Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx,[69] and some gossip repeated by Giraldus Cambrensis,[70] were afterwards bruited abroad.[71] Later founders may have preferred houses for canons only.

The Priory of the Holy Cross and the blessed Virgin Mary at Shouldham, in the west of Norfolk, was founded by Geoffrey FitzPiers in the reign of Richard I. He became Earl of Essex in the right of his wife, Beatrice de Say, sister of Geoffrey de Mandeville.[72] Following the example of Countess Roese, he wronged the monks of Walden, and favoured the Gilbertines. His wife, Beatrice de Say, "author of evils" wrote an angry monk of Walden, died in childbirth. "Whence he was confused, and grieved more than man can believe. Yet in all these things his

[67] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xxxi., xcvii.

[68] Water Mapes, "De Nugis Curialium," p. 59, Camden Society.

[69] Ailred of Rievaulx, "Historia de Sanctimoniali de Watthun," ed. Twysden, 1652.

[70] Giraldus Cambrensis, vol. iv. p. 185, Rolls Series.

[71] "L'Ordre de Bel Aise," "Political Songs," p. 137, Camden Society.

[72] Dugdale, "The Baronage of England," vol. i. p. 703.

anger was not turned away, but his hand was still stretched out against us. He bore the body of the woman to Chicksand, and there gave her an honourable burial in the chapter of the nuns. So that man, with others who follow after vain new things, was filled with admiration for that Order newly founded by a man called Gilbert of Sempringham, and founded a house of that Order in Norfolk, at Shouldham ; and there, as that new way of religion, unheard of through the centuries, demands, he assembled canons with nuns, brothers with sisters. And not long after he took away the body of the woman from Chicksand, and buried it in that place."[73] Geoffrey FitzPiers endowed the house with the two churches and the manor of Shouldham, three other churches,[74] and twelve shops with rooms over them in the parish of S. Mary Colechurch in London, to find lights in the Priory church and wine for the sacrifice of the Mass.[75] He died in 1243, and was buried by the side of Beatrice. Of him Matthew Paris said : "It was he that ruled the reins of government, so that after his death the realm was like a ship in a tempest, without a pilot."[76] When John heard of his death, he said, "By God's feet, now for the first time am I lord and king in England."[77]

The small Priory of New Bigging was near the Church of S. Mary, at Hitchin ;[78] the date and the founder are unknown.

The remaining foundations for canons were small and unimportant. Before the first year of John,[79] Godwin, a

[73] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 975, "e Chartulario Abb. de Walden."
[74] Ibid., p. 974. [75] Blomfield, "Norfolk," vol. vii. p. 418.
[76] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. ii. p. 559.
[77] Ibid. [78] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 982.
[79] Included in the list of houses in the charter of John to the Order of Sempringham, *cf.* "Rotuli Chartarum," ed. Hardy, p. 18. About 1177 "Godwinus Dives de Lincoln" granted a carucate of land, which he held of Countess Alice de Gant, to Sempringham. Gilbert of Sempringham received him, his wife, and heirs, into full fraternity. *Cf.* the *Genealogist*, vol. xv., p. 159, "Charters relating to the Priory of Sempringham," by Major E. M. Poynton. Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 969.

rich citizen of Lincoln, founded a Priory at Holland Brigge, or Bridge End, a few miles from Sempringham, in the heart of the fens. He willed that, after providing for their own support, the canons should repair the highway of Holland Brigge, and the thirty bridges upon it.[80] Clattercote Priory, near Banbury, founded in, or before, the first year of John, had a leper hospital attached to it.[81] Perhaps the wife of Ralph de Hauville persuaded him to found the Priory of Welles or Mirmaud, in Upwell, Cambridgeshire.[82] S. Gilbert's biographer recorded a vision seen by her when he died.[83]

Three other houses were in Yorkshire. In 1200 Hugh Murdac, perhaps a kinsman of Henry Murdac, Archbishop of York, founded the Priory of S. Andrew, in Fishergate, York, for twelve Sempringham canons, near the parish church of S. Andrew, which he granted to the house.[84] Before the fifth year of John, Alan de Wilton founded Oveton Priory on the south side of the Tees, in Richmondshire.[85] Ellerton, on the banks of the Derwent in Spaldingmore, was founded before 1212 by William FitzPeter; he bound the canons to maintain thirteen poor people.[86]

About 1228 a small band of canons from Sempringham settled at Fordham, in Cambridgeshire.[87] In 1348 Thomas Seymour obtained a license from Edward III. to grant his manor of Poulton, in Wiltshire, to the canons of Sempringham for a house of their Order.[88]

The founding of the houses at Cambridge and Stamford is of considerable interest. Towards the close of the thirteenth century a revival of learning took place among the Monastic Orders, manifesting itself in the building of halls at the Universities at which the younger monks might

[80] In the charter of 1 John.
[81] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 982.
[82] Ibid., p. 979.
[83] Ibid., p. xxiv.
[84] Ibid., p. 962.
[85] Ibid., p. 978.
[86] Ibid., p. 975.
[87] Ibid., p. 982.
[88] Ibid., p. 979.

S. MARY'S, POULTON, 1873.

[*Facing p.* 42.

study.[89] Through the growth of the Universities the great Benedictine monasteries had lost their fame as schools of learning. Jealousy of the influence of the friars provoked a new interest in learning among the monks; they saw, in the popularity of the new Orders, a danger to their own prestige. In the Order of the Friars Minor, the brethren, whom the University of Paris drew with an irresistible attraction, prevailed in the struggle with the Zelanti, who wanted to follow implicitly the precepts of S. Francis: of him who had taken as his spouse his gracious Lady Poverty. The care of the sick and the leper led naturally to the study of physics, the struggle with the heretic to the pursuit of scholastic theology.[90] Everywhere the friars sought the University towns.[91] Agnellus, the first Provincial of the Franciscans in England, "built a school in the Fratry of Oxford and persuaded Master Robert Grosseteste, of holy memory, to read lectures there to the brethren. Under him, within a very short time, they made unaccountable progress in sermons and in subtle moralities suitable to preaching."[92]

The Benedictines[93] started the connection between the Monastic Orders and the Universities. In 1283 John Giffard, Lord of Brimsfield, founded Gloucester Hall at Oxford for thirteen monks of S. Peter's, Gloucester. A General Chapter of the Benedictines, which met at the Abbey of S. Mary at Abingdon in 1289, imposed a tax of twopence for each monk upon the revenues of all the Benedictine monasteries in the province of Canterbury, to maintain a hall at Oxford as a "studium" for their monks. Apparently, in 1291 Gloucester Hall was

[89] Rashdall, "The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," vol. ii. part 2, p. 476.

[90] Monumenta Franciscana, pp. xliii., xlvii., Rolls Series.

[91] The Dominicans came to Oxford in 1221, the Franciscans in 1224. The Franciscans came to Cambridge in 1224 or 1225.

[92] Monumenta Franciscana, p. 37, Rolls Series.

[93] Rashdall, "The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," vol. ii. part 2, p. 476.

thrown open to all Black Monks in the southern province; the different houses added buildings for their own monks.

The Gilbertines speedily followed the example of the Benedictines. On June 9th, 1290, Pope Nicholas IV. sent a mandate to the Archdeacon of Stow "to grant the place held by the Friars of Penitence of Jesus Christ, which they are about to leave, to the Master and brethren of Sempringham, who often send members of their Order to study at the castle of Cambridge, and need a house there, in which they intend to have a canonry; a fair price being paid for the said place, which is to be deposited in safety for the Holy Land subsidy, or some other purpose as pleases the Pope." [94] On August 29th he granted a license to the Prior and brethren of Sempringham "to have within their house a discreet and learned doctor of theology, to teach those of their brethren who desire to study that science." [95] In the following year a convent of White Canons from Sempringham settled at the old chapel of S. Edmund, king and martyr, which they received from B. son of Walter.[96] Many houses were destroyed in Cambridge for the setting up of these colleges.[97] "The canons of Sempringham," wrote the chronicler of Barnwell Priory, "were diligent in hearing lectures and disputations, and held lectures and disputations at their own hall by the Chapel of S. Edmund's." [98] The houses of the Order paid a yearly contribution towards the support of their own scholars.[99]

In 1292 Robert Luterel, rector of Irnham, gave a manor in the parish of S. Peter, at Stamford, to the

[94] Bliss, Calendar of the Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 514. "At the Council of Lyons in 1274, the Friars of the Penitence of Jesus Christ were forbidden to admit new members, and the Order came to an end when the old members died out" (Little, "The Grey Friars in Oxford," p. 18).

[95] Ibid., p. 516.

[96] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 981.

[97] Stow, "The Annales of England," p. 205, ed. 1614.

[98] Nichols, "History and Antiquities of Barnwell Abbey," p. 35 n.

[99] "Valor Ecclesiasticus," vol. iv. pp. 18, 102, &c.

Priory of Sempringham, "desirous to increase the numbers of the convent, and that it might ever have scholars at Stamford studying divinity and philosophy."[100] He enjoined that the Master should provide a chaplain to minister to the scholars in the old chantry of S. Mary at the manor.

The fame of the Carmelite Schools at Stamford induced Robert Luterel to found Sempringham Hall.[101] Under Henry de Hanna, the second Provincial General of the Carmelites in England, they had settled at Stamford about 1261, and opened schools "for the youth of that and other Orders, as also noble and gentlemen's children who were educated by the fathers of that society." In 1265 the dispersal of the Oxford and Cambridge scholars from Northampton, to which they had seceded after town and gown rows, probably transferred a number of them to Stamford. By forcing them to leave Northampton, Henry III. avenged himself on the Oxford scholars, who had stoutly defended the town against him with their bows and arrows; and at the same time he strengthened the Carmelite Schools at Stamford, of which he was a great benefactor, if not the founder. Henry de Hanna, William Lidlington, his successor, and Nicholas de Stamford, gave the schools of Stamford a high reputation. Master William Wheteley,[102] "who ruled the schools at Stamford in 1309," was perhaps induced to retire from Oxford through an encounter between masters and scholars. He wrote "De Disciplina Scholarium," an appropriate commentary on Boethius, Colleges and halls quickly arose; Grey, Black, and Austin Friars had their own schools; Benedictines from Peterborough and Cistercians from Vauldey came to the halls of their Order. Clerks who were not of "the religious,"

[100] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. 947, 948.

[101] *Et seq.*, *cf.* Peck, "Antiquarian Annals of Stamford," book ix. pp. 23–50; and book xi., pp. 21, 22.

[102] Rashdall, "Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," vol. ii. part ii. p. 397, note.

studied at Brazenose.[103] Some writers [104] have recognised a University "in all but name" soon after the establishment of the Carmelite Schools, but Mr. Rashdall has shown that "there is no evidence that there were any but purely claustral schools at Stamford till 1334." "In that year a very determined effort to found a new University at Stamford was made by the Northern scholars of Oxford, worsted in their battles with the Southerners, or, as another account has it, by masters beaten in an encounter with scholars. It required the most strenuous exertion of the royal authority to disperse the seventeen masters who persisted in lecturing in spite of the royal prohibition; and until within living memory an oath not to lecture at Stamford was exacted from candidates for the Mastership at Oxford." [105] Edward III. thus struck a deathblow at the University of Stamford. How long the schools continued it is impossible to say. Only tradition told Leland of their existence when he went to Stamford: "And because that a great voice rennith that sometyme readinges of liberalle sciences were at Staunford, the names of Peterborough Haulle, Semplingham and Vauldier, yet remain there; as places for those houses of men of religion that put their scholars thither to study. Except a man wille say, that these houses otherwyse cumming to them, kept theyr names." [106]

Walter Mapes noted that the Order of S. Gilbert had not spread out of England.[107] It never did. Probably the great distance from the other Houses prompted Roger, Master of Sempringham, to refuse the offer of Walter FitzAllan, seneschal of Scotland, to found a house north of the Tweed.[108] "Inspired by divine instinct to advance from virtue to virtue," wrote Walter FitzAllan, "because I

[103] Peck, "Antiquarian Annals of Stamford," book xi. pp. 21, 22.
[104] Henson, "Collectanea," Oxford Historical Society, vol. v. p. 3.
[105] Rashdall, "Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," vol. ii. part ii. pp. 397 n. and 398.
[106] Leland, "Itinerary," vol. vi. p. 26.
[107] Walter Mapes, "De Nugis Curialium," p. 59, Camden Society.
[108] Cartulary of Malton, f. 227. MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi.

have understood that there is no zeal against zeal of souls, for my own safety, for that of my ancestors and successors, for the increase of religion and the saving of souls, I have proposed to found a house of your Order in the parts of Scotland at Newton-upon-Ayr at my own expense." The Master and Order leased Walter FitzAllan's generous endowment to the Abbot and Convent of Paisley for a rent of forty marks a year, to be paid to the Priors of Malton and S. Andrew's by York at the Premonstratensian Abbey of Dryburgh on the Tweed.

III.

THE RULE OF SEMPRINGHAM.

"GILBERT laid the twofold discipline of monastic life on those under him, that they might the more carefully keep the way which he had shown to them. To the nuns he gave the Rule of the blessed Benedict, to the learned brothers the Rule of S. Augustine; to all, the example of Christ and His saints."[1] "He culled from the statutes and customs of divers churches and monasteries, as though he gathered the fairest flowers, and chose out those which he judged the more necessary and fitting for the weakness of men. So great was his care, that he took not only great and most needful matters, but, like the angel ascending and descending upon the ladder of Jacob, he did not leave out even the smallest and most humble. All these things he intrusted to writing that they might be remembered, and he called them by the appropriate name 'Scripta'[2] . . . Eugenius III. read them diligently and found no fault in them."[3]

Gilbert studied the Cistercian Rule during his stay at Clairvaux in 1147–8, when S. Bernard helped him to adapt it to his Order. He borrowed largely from the Charter of Charity, the Institutes, and Book of Uses of the Cister-

[1] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xii.

[2] "The Institutions of Gilbert, and his successors, drawn up by the General Chapters," were printed by Dugdale in the Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xxix.–xcvii., "from an old manuscript belonging to Roger Twysden, baronet, of East Peckham in the county of Kent."

[3] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xiii.

cians,[4] as well as from the Customs of the Augustinian[5] and Premonstratensian Canons. As these were new Orders, which had lately come into England,[6] he deemed them stricter than the Benedictines and Clugniacs.

The institution of the general chapter was due to the Cistercian Order. To Stephen Harding, the first Abbot of Citeaux, the Clugniacs seemed to have grown slothful as their wealth increased. He sought to insure the continuance of the Cistercian Order in its first vigour by means of external jurisdiction. Accordingly he drew up the "Charta Charitatis." This constitution provided that the Abbots should assemble each year at a general chapter at Citeaux to discuss all important matters concerning the Order. It also introduced a system of mutual visitation to enforce the strict observance of the Rule, each new "conventus" owing obedience to the house from which it had gone forth.[7]

Gilbert instituted an annual general chapter at Sempringham,[8] on the three Rogation Days, in imitation of the Cistercian chapter at which he was present in 1147. He

[4] J. T. Fowler, "The Cistercian Statutes."

[5] J. Willis Clark, "Customs of Augustinian Canons."

[6] The Cistercians first settled at Waverley in 1128, the Augustinians at Colchester in 1105, the Premonstratensians, or reformed Augustinians of S. Norbert, at Newhouse in 1143.

[7] *English Historical Review*, October, 1893.

The visitation of the bishop was excluded in practice, though at first the Cistercians claimed the merit of canonical obedience to that authority which the bishops had so much difficulty in asserting. The Charta Charitatis was a direct contrast to the plan of the Benedictines, by which each monastery was a distinct family in no way bound to any other, had its separate autonomy, and developed on its own lines. Pope Calixtus II. at once confirmed the Charta Charitatis in 1119; the Papacy regarded its working so favourably that in 1215 Innocent III. made the convocation of the general chapter and some system of visitation compulsory upon all Orders.

[8] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xcv.–xcvii., "Institutiones de Magno Capitulo." The time of the chapter is mentioned in Cart. 12 Henry III., m. 11 (Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 947) in a grant of the church of Fordham to cover the expenses of the chapter.

summoned the Prior, Cellarer, and two Prioresses from each house, the Scrutators General and the Scrutators of the Cloister. "There they may diligently discuss the observation of the holy rule and the order of its whole life, and the keeping of unbroken peace among themselves, that their way of life may not easily grow cold but continue through the long space of many years. . . . And because evil communications and useless speech bring forth no good fruit, but are contrary to religion and the safety of souls, we desire to avoid this vice. We will therefore follow in the footsteps of the Cistercian chapter, in which the graingers are not admitted but are utterly excluded. We decree that this be diligently observed in our general chapter. And that all suspicion of evil and strife be excluded, let no one of our Order come to the general chapter, unless he be summoned by name by the Master."

Minute regulations were drawn up for the journey to the chapter. The nuns were forbidden to ride, as it was manifestly unsuitable to their religion. They drove in a cart, covered in so that they were seen of no one, and were accompanied by "mature" brothers, "whom the Prior chose out to help them diligently and reverently in all their needs." Neither he nor the Cellarer could themselves go with them nor enter into a ship with them. The brothers stood afar off when the nuns left their cart. They might not eat, drink, or lodge at the house of another Order. For pittances—extra allowances—they could have butter or cheese, if there was no fish; if resting at a house of the Order, one pittance sufficed with the ordinary fare. The same rule held for the brothers, lest any should say "that the pleasure of the stomach allured them to the chapter." Philip de Kyme granted to Bullington Priory the right of fishing in Dogdyke Water, with four men, two boats, and two nets, on two days in the year, when the nuns went to the general chapter and returned from it.[9] Countess Alice, daughter

[9] MS. Add. 6118, f. 380, British Museum.

of Gilbert de Gant, granted land in Heckington, a few miles from Sempringham, at which the nuns might have a hostel when they came to the general chapter.[10]

All the canons and brothers, nuns and sisters, at Sempringham, went into the chapter to listen to the "edifying words" of the Master. Afterwards, those who had been summoned discussed the "institutions," changed them, or added to them, according to the privilege granted them by the papal bulls. "With lighted candles, they shall strike with anathema all who conspire against the Order and stir up strife in the houses." All received absolution together before setting out on their homeward journey.

On the death of the Master a special chapter was held. The Prior of the house in which he died speedily sent the news of the Master's death to all of the Order, and bade the Prior and two Prioresses from each house, the Scrutators and Scrutatrices, and one or two "mature" canons and nuns, come to the chapter at Sempringham. When all had assembled, the Prior of Sempringham delivered the body of the dead Master for burial with due solemnity. Immediately afterwards they proceeded to the election of another Master. S. Gilbert bade them seek "devout religion, disciplined character, and discreet wisdom, rather than deep learning or noble birth. If he be not a man of pleasant speech, a diligent follower of the institutions of the Order and a lover of virtue, he shall not be admitted but rejected by all."[11]

"The form for electing the Master is this. First, all shall choose four men, having the fear of the Lord before their eyes, and zealous for the Order. They shall swear on the Scriptures that they will take to themselves nine men, namely, five Priors and four canons, conspicuous for honourable lives and unspotted reputations. The four electors shall tell the names of the nine before all, so that

[10] The *Genealogist*, vol. xv. p. 161, "Charters relating to Sempringham Priory." "After 1184."

[11] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxx.

if the greater and wiser part wish to refuse any one, he shall be taken out from the number of the chosen. And when they have consented, all the Priors and canons shall go into the chapter of the nuns, and the form of electing the Master shall be explained to them, that they may give their consent. Afterwards all those thirteen shall swear that they will choose him whom they think best fitted to rule the Order, not mindful of friendship, hatred, intimacy, favour, regard, and whatever can pervert the judgment of man. They shall go apart to speak concerning their hard task. The rest of the canons shall celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit, while the brothers, nuns, and sisters remain at prayer. Then all shall return to the chapter of the nuns, and promise once more that they will hold the election valid. One of the thirteen shall declare whom they have chosen, saying, 'Behold, in the fear of the Lord, we have chosen this man as your Master.' With singing of 'Te Deum' he shall be led to the altar, and thence to the chapter of the nuns, in which the institutions touching the Master, his way of life, and his governance, shall be read distinctly and openly in the hearing of all. He shall swear that he will keep all the liberties and institutions of the Order . . . and that he will cause those under him to observe them, by precept and by example. Immediately all shall owe him the wonted obedience."[12]

Though the "Abbot of Abbots" of the Cistercian Order was Abbot of Citeaux, the Master, or "Prior of All," of the Sempringham Order was not Prior of the house of Sempringham. As the whole Order was under his governance, he was not attached to any one house, but he carried on a perpetual visitation in the place of the bishops.[13] He visited each house as often as he could every year, either riding with a lay-brother in attendance, or driving in a two-wheeled cart, never with more than

[12] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxxi.

[13] The Order was exempt from the visitation of the bishops, *cf.* Chapter V.

six horses. He was always accompanied by two canons, "lest, like Moses, his arms should fail, and in the conflict with the unjust, the wicked, like Amalech, should prevail."[14] He inquired into the spiritual condition of the houses; entering the nuns' inclosure with a faithful companion, he heard those confessions which had been reserved for him. He appointed all the chief officers, and admitted the novices to the Order. His consent was necessary for transfers, sales, and purchases of lands, woods, and everything above the value of three marks. His seal was affixed to all charters; two copies were made on the same parchment, and one was carefully kept among the records of the house. No action at law could be taken without the Master.[15]

The power of the Master was absolute, but he held office only so long as he could fulfil his duties. If he sinned, or became too old and infirm, and still refused to retire after three warnings in the same year, he could be deposed at the next general chapter.[16]

As the Order increased in numbers, the work of the Master became too heavy for Gilbert. The chapter therefore granted to the Master the power of appointing yearly, with their advice, two canons and a lay-brother to undertake some of his duties, and two nuns and a lay-sister to visit the women. Minute instructions were given to these Scrutators General and Scrutatrices.[17] When setting out from one house for another, they were supplied with food for the journey, and on their arrival they had a pittance. Any house was bound to provide one of them with new clothes and shoes when they were in want of them; no one might ask for himself but each pointed out the other's need of help. They took a needle and thread with them "to mend rents in their clothes and shoes." The men stayed at least a week at each house. They

[14] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxxi.
[15] Ibid., pp. xxxi., xxxii.
[16] Ibid., p. xxxi.
[17] Ibid., pp. xxxiv.–xxxvii, "Capitula de Summis Scrutatoribus.'

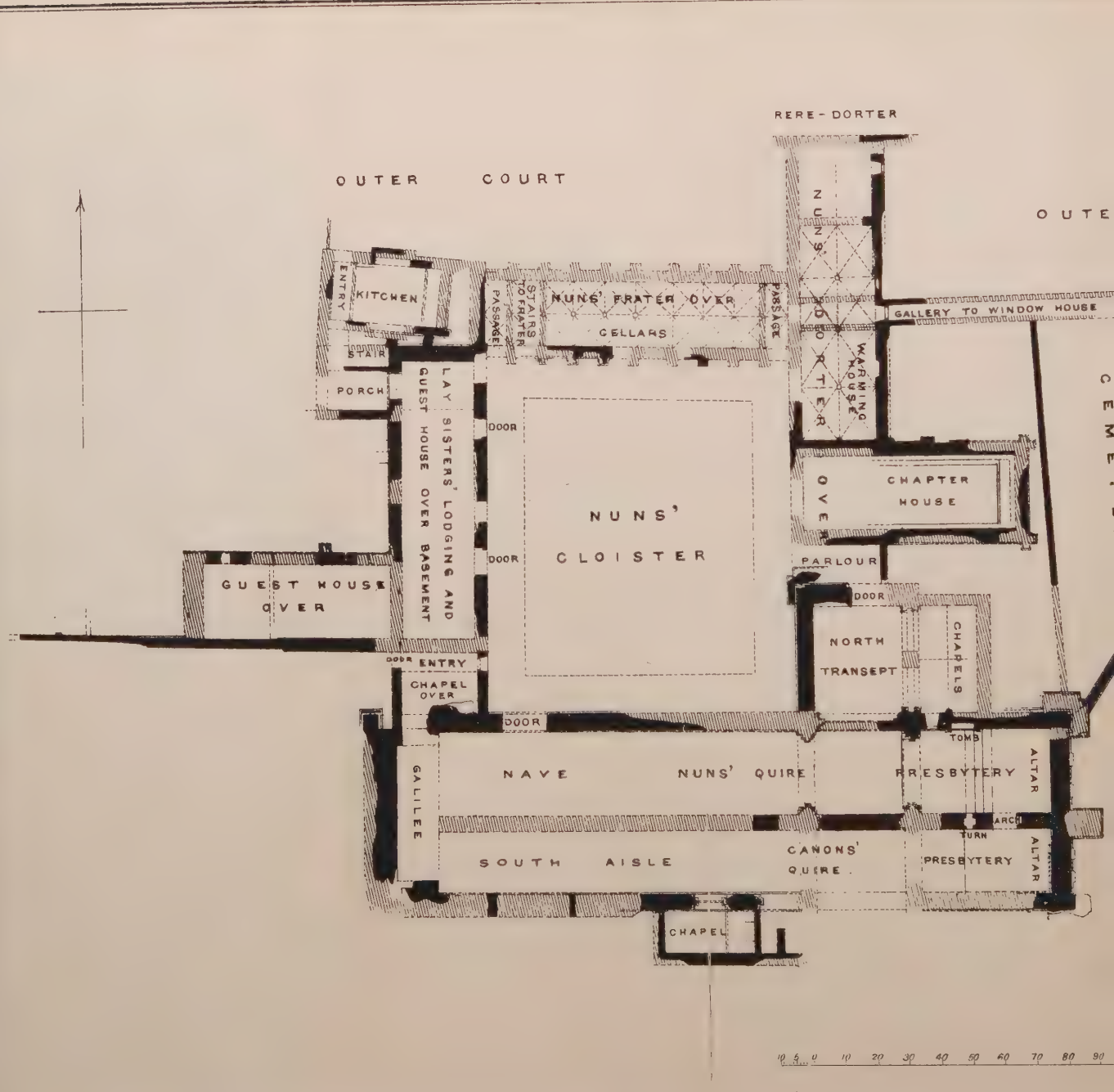
might not ride nor go by boat without special leave from the Master, but each house lent them a horse to carry their baggage to the next. The women, who only visited once a year, or at most twice, in going and returning, travelled in a cart, covered in so that they were seen of no one. A canon and a lay-brother accompanied them to do everything needful for them, but they might not speak with them unless some special need should arise such as death, fire, or theft, and then in the presence of others. They were forbidden to lodge at any religious houses of men "on account of malignant tongues," except only, should need arise, at the granges of their own Order.

The brothers and sisters "who made scrutiny," were warned not to bring any charge in malice; if they concealed any fault or slothfulness they sat, as though excommunicated, for forty days on the floor of the frater when they ate or drank. After the general chapter all returned to their own houses, at which they unfastened their baggage, in the presence of Prior or Prioress, to show that they had brought nothing which they ought not to have. If any brother despised this rule, he was punished for his disobedience by stripes and fasting. If a nun or a sister offended, she repented in the lowest rank, was deprived of the communion for seven years, and sent to another house to be chastened by "discipline" and fasting.

In remembrance of his own office of Penitentiary Priest of Lincoln, Gilbert appointed a Priest of Confession to travel round with the Scrutators.[18]

The buildings of a Gilbertine house were briefly described in the Rule. The priory church of the nuns, which the brothers builded as well as they knew how, stood in the centre of the pile. A partition wall divided the church throughout its entire length from East to West;[19] at the Yorkshire house of Watton[20] it was nearly

[18] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xxxv. and lxxxviii.
[19] *Athenæum*, October 7, 1893.
[20] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 955.


RERE-DORTER
OUTER COURT
OUTE
ENTRY
KITCHEN
STAIR
PORCH
PASSAGE
STAIRS TO FRATER
NUNS' FRATER OVER
CELLARS
PASSAGE
GALLERY TO WINDOW HOUSE
WARMING HOUSE
DOOR
DOOR
LAY SISTERS' LODGING AND GUEST HOUSE OVER BASEMENT
NUNS' CLOISTER
CHAPTER HOUSE
PARLOUR
DOOR
GUEST HOUSE OVER
DOOR ENTRY
CHAPEL OVER
NORTH TRANSEPT
CHAPELS
DOOR
TOMB
ALTAR
GALILEE
NAVE
NUNS' QUIRE
PRESBYTERY
ARCH
TURN
ALTAR
SOUTH AISLE
CANONS' QUIRE
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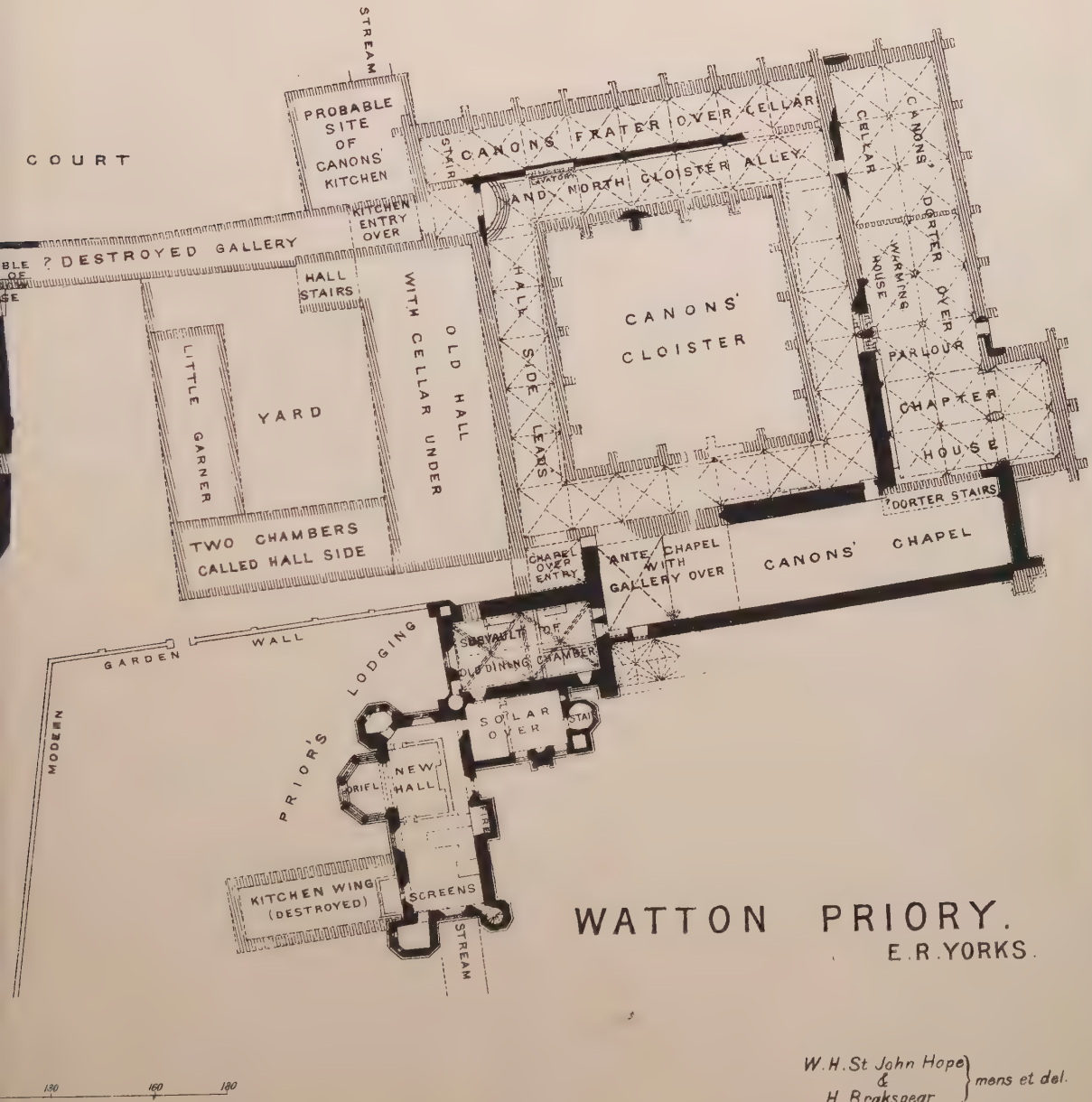

WATTON PRIORY.

E.R.YORKS.

W.H.St John Hope & H.Brakspear } mens et del.

five feet thick, and the northern side, used by the more numerous nuns and sisters, was the larger part. The wall was high enough to prevent the men and women from seeing each other, but it did not reach to the roof, that the women might hear High Mass, celebrated daily at the canons' altar by two or three canons chosen by the Prior, and the sermon preached on feast days. A few feet from the east end stood the door in the dividing wall, which was opened for the processions, in which the whole community took part on the fourteen great festivals of the Order.[21] Just beyond the door was the turn-table window of communion,[22] through which the canons passed the chalice to the nuns, and restored it to their care when Mass was over. The window of confession,[23] at which the Priest of Confession heard the nuns and sisters sent by the Prioress, was of "the length of a finger, and hardly of a thumb in breadth," and was protected by an iron plate. Two other nuns and canons were present to watch how the priest and the woman bore themselves: "Let him not ask who she is or whence, or say who he is or whence he comes, or speak of vain things contrary to religion."[24] The place of extreme unction was either in the Church or in the Farmery of the nuns.[25] When a sister lay dying the Sacrist rang the bell twice, four canons and a lay-brother entered to perform the office of anointing in the presence of several nuns.

On the north side of the church was the larger cloister of the nuns, with their buildings ranged around it, the fraters and dorters of nuns and sisters, the chapter-house, farmery, common-room, cellerarium, and kitchen. The Rule decreed that these should be better built, more beautiful, and more honourable than those of the men.[26] The auditorium or parlour stood apart in the garden. The strictest rules were laid down for its use: "since the ancient

[21] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxxi.
[22] Ibid., p. lxxxix.
[23] Ibid., p. lxxv.
[24] Ibid., p. lxxxviii.
[25] Ibid., p. lxxxix.
[26] Ibid., p. lxxii.

enemy proposes to himself to have restitution in the parlour for the losses inflicted on him in the Chapter, we will that the entry into the parlour be rare and necessary, and we utterly interdict chattering and vain speech among sisters and brothers alike."[27] In the parlour or in the chapter, the Prioress heard the confessions of nuns and sisters, not more than two entering at once; she might sit if many came, but they stood to confess, "unless some manifest infirmity and grave need merited mercy."[28] When the Prioress commanded, a "lettered" nun explained the rule to the nuns and sisters assembled there. Guests were sometimes received in the parlour: "If by chance some noble woman has come, secular or religious, and if anything is to be spoken which cannot be indicated by signs, we allow speech concerning the domestic matters of our profession."[29] The guest hostel,[30] with its separate oratory, stood in a remote corner of the garden, "apart from the paths and view of the nuns." Two or three "mature and discreet" nuns met the guests and talked with them when they came, and the lay-sisters waited on them. No guest could stay more than one night nor enter any of the nun's buildings without leave from the Prioress. The window[31] at which the nuns spoke with their relations, was "of the length of a finger and hardly of a thumb in breadth," and, like the window of confession, was protected by an iron plate. Once or twice a year they might speak "privately" with fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, or daughters, and with other near kinsfolk "of mature age," in the presence of two witnesses who saw and heard all.

The dwellings of the canons and lay-brothers opened off a cloister on the south side of the church.[32] They had their own oratory, for, after the dispute with the lay-brothers,

[27] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. lv., lxxxiv. [28] Ibid., p. lxxxiv.
[29] Ibid., p. lxxxiv. [30] Ibid., p. lxxxv. [31] Ibid., p. lxxv.
[32] At Sempringham and at Watton the nuns' cloister was on the north of the church, the canons on the south, as at Malton also.

Gilbert commanded that they should only attend the nuns' church on Sundays and feast days. In the two fraters of the men were turn-table windows[33] opening into the nuns' quarters, built so that "the men may not be seen by the sisters, nor the sisters by the men." These were barely two feet high and broad: "if they be found larger, the Prior, Cellarer, Grainger, Carpenter, and their 'companions,' and those who guard the window, shall be deprived of receiving the body and blood of the Lord; and throughout a whole year they shall repent for two days in each week on bread and water." The windows locked firmly, and a "cautious faithful nun" kept the keys.

A high wall and a moat encircled the buildings. "Three marks shall be taken each year from the pennies of the nuns to shut them in with moat and wall or hedge, until they are secure. . . . No expense shall be spared until the view and approach of all is shut out from them. No one shall enter the nuns' garden without manifest cause, nor without the command of the great of the house."[34] The gate, through which four-wheeled carts entered, was protected "within and without by bolts and very faithful guards."[35]

Gilbert gave his canons the Rule of S. Augustine.[36] As this enjoined little but a common life and the renunciation of property, he added many statutes for their guidance from the customs of the Augustinians and the Premonstratensians. In each house of nuns there were at least seven canons, but not more than thirteen, "unless it had resources so abundant that they were enough for the need of the canons, and the nuns were not thereby straitened."[37]

As the canons[38] were chosen out by Gilbert to be the

[33] "Fenestræ versatiles," Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxv.

[34] Ibid., p. lxxiv. [35] Ibid., p. lxxiv.

[36] From the 109th Epistle. It was enforced on all regular canons by a decree of the Lateran Council in 1139.

[37] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xlii.

[38] Ibid., pp. xlii.–lix., "Capitula de Canonicis."

priests and learned brothers of the Order, they passed their time in worship, improvement, and reading in church, chapter, and cloister. The administration of property was their "labour": they did not toil with the lay-brothers, and, unless their help was really needed, they never lost their time for reading in the cloister, except at haymaking and at wheat harvest. They rose at midnight for the great service of Matins, after which they left the oratory, and returned to the dorter. From Easter until Holy Cross Day, September 11th, they slept until the bell roused them at dawn for Prime. In the winter they prayed quietly in the dorter, or got a light from the Sacrist and sat reading "all together," in a place appointed by the Prior, "not apart in corners," "wearing their hoods so that it could be seen whether they slept or not." In the double houses the canons went to the oratory for the services of the seven hours when the nuns' Sacrist rang the bell. As the day lasted from sunrise to sunset, and was divided into twelve hours, the times for Terce, Sext, and the other services varied greatly during the year. Morning Mass was sung immediately after Prime, and the priests said any private masses before Terce. Two or three canons went to the nuns' church each day to celebrate High Mass at the canons' altar on their side of the dividing wall.

The daily chapter, at which the canons listened to exhortations and received discipline, was held after Terce in the winter, after Prime in the summer. All assembled in the Chapter, bowing humbly as they took their seats and rising again as the Prior entered. He gave the Benediction and recited the Pater Noster. The Lector—the Reader for the week—began the reading of the Rule, which was divided into six parts, the first to be read on Monday; if time failed to read the Saturday portion, which was rather long, it was finished at the noonday meal. After the portion from the Rule, the Reader took the board from the Precentor, on which were written all the notices of the services, and the names of the canons who were to take

part in them for the week. A brief service for the commemoration of the dead of the Order followed, and any letters announcing the death of a member or a friend were read by the Precentor, the Prior saying "Requiescant in pace." The Lector then handed the book of the Rule to the Prior, who expounded a part of it or preached a sermon. He might ask a canon or any stranger present to admonish the brethren. When it was over, all sat in silence until the Prior said, "Loquamur de ordine nostro" ("Let us speak about our Order"). Any canon who knew he had offended confessed his fault and asked for pardon. Accusations of the brethren followed. The accuser might not bring vague charges on suspicion only, but must say clearly, "He did this thing." When the accused heard his name he made no answer, but begged for pardon. The Prior asked him, "What sayest thou?" If guilty, he answered, prostrate, "The fault is mine"; if innocent, "I remember it not." The accuser could not repeat his accusation unless the Prior questioned him further, but if another canon knew of the accused's guilt he could bear witness to it. The Prior adjudged the punishment. If he was to be scourged, he sat down and bared his back to the waist. With bowed head he meekly submitted to the chastisement, saying only, "The fault is mine, I will make amends." The Prior bade one of the canons administer discipline, taking care that he was neither his accuser nor below him in degree, for "a deacon may not strike a priest." All kept silence, unless perhaps one of the older canons interceded for him. When the Prior bade the scourging cease, another canon helped him to clothe himself, and he stood waiting until the Prior said, "Go, weary brother." The accused could not bring an accusation against his accuser in the same chapter. The penalty for a false accusation was bread and water for two days in the week, or two floggings in the chapter. When the business for the day was completed, all rose and turned to the east while the Prior said, "Our help is in the Name of the

Lord" ; after giving the response, "Who hath made heaven and earth," they left the chapter in procession.

In the cloister they sat down to read, "the face of one to the back of the other, each with his own book." The choir-brothers who sang in the antiphons, hymns, and gradals, and the lectors, who were reading their portions beforehand to the Precentor, or a brother whom he had chosen, might share the same book. "They shall not vex each other with questions, except when they know not how to point their chants, how to say the words in the reading, where to begin at table, at collation, and at vigils." If a brother went away he put his book back in the aumbry (cupboard), or if he wished to leave it at his seat, he made a sign to the brother beside him to keep it for him. If any one needed a book which a brother was using, he offered him another to let him have it in peace; if he refused, he suffered it, and waited to make accusation against him in the chapter. "If any one sign to another with angry face or fierce look he shall be chidden once or twice, and unless he make amends, shall have discipline thrice in the chapter and eat for three days on the floor of the frater, that he may be brought to confusion and repent. Thus shall they bear themselves when they sit. But when they walk, they shall go on their way in humility, and when they meet each other they shall make supplication with uncovered head, save only when they labour." "No one shall seize another by the hood, neither shall he lift up his voice to call him from afar."

The canons wrote in the cloister, and were only permitted to enter the common-room to dry their parchments at the fire. They had to abandon such tasks in the extreme winter cold. Writing was not encouraged as in the Benedictine houses: "No one shall write books, prayers, or meditations without the consent of the Prior. He who writes secretly shall atone for his fault in the chapter and shall eat seven days on the floor of the frater, content with one dish, and on the sixth day with bread

and water. He shall be put down from his rank for the space of half a year, or submit to the discipline of the Rule. He who hires writers and keeps them in the houses in which there are nuns, thereby straitening them, shall be in danger of losing his power if he is one in authority, and shall be severely scourged ; and what is written shall be for the use of all at the will of the Prior, and he shall lack that writing for ever." Those "who wrote without ceasing, to whom some mercy of sleep was granted," probably copied the service-books until the house had enough. The rhetorical style of many ecclesiastics, who prided themselves on their learning, made another rule necessary : "He who writes letters, shall write simply, and above all shall avoid the vanity of profound and swelling words."

The Precentor [39] provided ink and parchment for the writers. He took charge of the service-books, "collects, calendars, breviaries great and small," allowing the canons each week to take those which they needed for the services. Every day, when the time for reading was over, he locked up the books of the canons in the aumbry. He probably drew up the list of books needed by the canons which the Scrutator of the Cloister presented at the window of the nuns, since it is especially mentioned in the Institutes that books, like other valuables, should be in their care.

In the summer the canons had two meals ; in the winter season, when the day was much shorter, they were content with one. A fire was lighted in the frater when it was very cold. When the Sacrist rang the hour, the Prior gave a sign. The canons washed their hands at the laver in the cloister, went into the frater, and stood in their places until the Prior entered. Then he rang a bell. All said the "Miserere mei Dominus" [40] aloud, and the Pater Noster silently, while the Prior recited it, and completed the benediction by making the sign of the Cross. He gave a blessing to the Lector who read during the

[39] Gasquet, "The Old English Bible and other Essays," "Medieval Monastic Libraries."

[40] Psalm li.

meal. All went to their places at the tables; no one might sit unbidden at that of the Prior. The tables were raised "so that access and withdrawal were possible from beneath." Spoons, knives, and drinking vessels were laid upon them. At the end of the first verse read by the Lector, the canons uncovered the bread, and the servitors carried the food along the tables, first to the Master, if he was present, then to the Prior, Sub-prior, and the others in order. They set out the dishes, two and two, first on the right, then on the left. "If any one cannot eat of one dish let him eat of the other; if of neither, they shall bring him something else so long as it is not a delicacy." If a pittance was given through the mercy of a benefactor, only one dish (pulmentum) was provided; if the poverty of the house did not prevent it they might have a pittance daily. The old and the sick had a pittance when it was not granted to the others. The Institutes contained some curious examples of manners at meals. "No one shall wipe his knife with his napkin unless he have first rubbed it dry with bread. He who wishes for salt must take it with his knife. He who drinks must hold his cup with both hands." At the end of the meal the servitors collected the dishes and took away the spoons. The Prior stopped the Lector, when he thought that the reading had lasted long enough. At the sound of his bell all stood up before the tables, saying the verse which the Precentor began. They went out two and two, those of the choir singing alternate verses of the "Miserere mei Dominus"; the others followed them to the church for the brief service of thanks. In the winter they returned to read in the cloister; in summer they retired to the dorter for the midday sleep. The Lector and the servitors refreshed themselves after the others in winter, before them in summer that they might not shorten the time for sleep. All that remained of the food was sent back to the nuns through the window. Until they reached the age of thirty the canons were allowed to have Mixtum —a slight refreshment of bread and ale, taken before Terce in summer, before Sext in winter.

At the hour for Collation—the evening reading—all the canons, who were scattered in the garden, assembled in the cloister to listen to the Lector. Compline followed immediately; then all went to the dorter, and no one might speak again before the next day. Their beds were "like those of the Cistercians"; they had pillows and coverlets, too, if some benefactor gave them, though they might not buy them for themselves. They might not get into bed standing up, but "turned their legs under the coverlet." To sit in the dorter was contrary to the Rule, except at appointed times in the winter, and when they took off their shoes, put them on, or changed their tunics, which they did with the utmost care that no one might behold another naked.

The sick were taken into the farmery, to be cared for by the Canon in charge of it and his companion. Either the Prior or the Cellarer celebrated Mass before them daily and visited them, "mindful of the Gospel words, 'I was sick and ye visited me.'" Those who had been bled had special indulgences. At the four seasons when the bleeding took place—in February, April, about S. John the Baptist's Day, and in September, the Prior announced each day in the chapter who would be bled, taking care that Vigils could be duly celebrated without them. A fire was lighted in the common-room, in which the brother chosen by the Prior performed the operation at the time for reading or for labour. Those who were bled could lie on their beds, or sit in the chapter and cloister. For three days they had better food and no labour; on the fourth day the Prior gave them some light task or excused them altogether. They were shaved seventeen times in the year.

All owed absolute obedience to the Prior, who had usually served the longest time at the house. He presided in the chapter and frater, celebrated Mass on Sundays and feast days, and performed the last rites for the dead. In his absence the Sub-prior held the chapter, visited the sick in the farmery, gave permission for speaking in the

auditorium and for bleeding, heard confessions and granted absolutions, but he could not give leave to canons and brothers to go anywhere "into the world" except on the business of the house, or to secular women to go in to the nuns, or for men to speak with them.[41]

The Cellarer [42] watched carefully over the property of the house and kept all the accounts. On one roll he noted down the names of the hired servants and their wages within a month of the hiring; he paid them himself in the presence of the Prior except at the distant granges, to which he went alone. With the Prior, the Cellarer distributed new clothes to the canons at stated times. He looked after the tanners to see that they took the best lambskins about the Feast of S. John the Baptist to make the pelisses and cloaks for the house. The Sub-cellarer,[43] "a gentle cautious canon," had various housekeeping duties to perform; he never went far from the house unless the Prior had no one else to send to the granges to hear the confessions of the lay-brothers. At the due hour he received the bread from the bakehouse and distributed it for the hired servants, the granges, the guest hostels and the doorkeeper. He had charge of the guest hostel, with a faithful lay-brother under him to attend on the guests.

The Rule of the lay-brothers, Gilbert borrowed from the Cistercian Institutes.[44] He told how "at the time when the religious life of the nuns of Sempringham began, there came monks of the Cistercian Order . . ., and with them lay-brothers, ready to labour, in poor dress, content with the food of the poor; they reckoned herbs and pulse as riches, and a draught of water was pleasant enough to those who dwelt in the granges. Hearing this, many of the common sort of labourers serving us in poor food wished to live for God with us. Willing to satisfy their desire, we have granted it for the safety of our soul, and thence is what we

[41] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxxviii.
[42] Ibid., pp. xxxix., xl., xli. [43] Ibid., p. xli.
[44] Ibid., pp. lix.–lxxii, "Scripta de Fratribus."

have written. We will that our lay-brothers follow the form of the brothers of the Order of Citeaux who dwell in the granges, unless anything new be added which hinders its first rigour. If they scorn their vow and profession, they shall be cut off from the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ until they repent and make satisfaction for so great a transgression."[45]

Careful rules were drawn up for the daily life of the brothers who served at the priory or at the granges. A special bell was rung, by order of the Prior, to wake the brothers at the priory, on account of their hard labour; in summer they slept until after Lauds, because they had no midday rest "by institution, only by grace." "If time permitted," they attended Vigils, Lauds, and even Prime, in the oratory. They said the prayers and responses which they had been taught to use at the other hours, wherever they were at work. They "kept silence" everywhere, all "chattering and false tales" were forbidden, and under threat of anathema they might not come together to talk unless one of the four Procurators was present. Cobblers, smiths, bakers, weavers, tanners and others could speak about their work, if they could not keep silence "without detriment to it." When there was no longer light to labour, one of the brothers struck a board. All at once ceased, said compline, and went to the dorter. Every Wednesday evening, except at haymaking and in August, they held a chapter, over which the Prior or a canon presided; they made accusations and received discipline like the canons. On Sundays and on the thirty-eight feast days, on which the brothers might not labour, they attended the services and the canons' chapter, at which they heard the Prior's sermon. The rules for fasting were relaxed for them.

Each grange was a small religious house, with its oratory, frater, dorter, common-room, and guest hostel. Workshops for smiths, carpenters, cobblers, tailors, and others,

[45] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lix.

all stood within the walled garden, "that no danger of souls might arise"; stables and sheds for the animals could be built outside if it was deemed expedient. Only the lay-brothers lived at the granges with the hired servants; they were under the rule of the Grainger, who fulfilled the same duties as the Prior of the canons in the frater and oratory, and at the Hours of the day. He spoke to the brothers about their work, "briefly, not to more than two or three at a time."

The whole responsibility of the management of the farm lay on the Grainger: he could have a companion to help him if he chose, and a "faithful" brother was always appointed to have full knowledge of his doings. It was his duty to see that all lands of the farm were sown with the seed that best suited them; if he neglected this duty, he was allowed only one loaf of bread a day until the crops were reaped. In the autumn a "faithful" brother went round the granges with the threshers to thresh out as much grain as the priory needed for the year's use and for seed; the rest was stored unthreshed, to be sold for the gain of the house. With the Grainger, he carefully noted the number of quarters by tally, keeping apart the tithes of the corn paid to the priory from its appropriated churches, "that we may know what we receive from our labour." A tally was kept of each kind of grain or vegetable used for seed. "In obedience to the Lord, since it is written 'divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord,'" and also to exclude all fraud, the same pecks and measures were used at all the granges as at the priory. Each year a "faithful" brother was chosen to go round the granges and look after the cheese and butter with the brothers of the dairy. The brother of the hostel at the grange had geese, chickens, and bees in his charge; he sent eggs, honey, and fruit to the nuns. Certain brothers had the tasks of preparing flour for the kitchen, and malt for the ale, which was brewed by the lay-sisters, never at the

granges without leave from the Master. At the three great feasts, casks of ale were sent from the priory with an allowance of two or three measures for each brother.

The number of horses and oxen needful for each grange and the measure of their daily food was settled by common counsel of the priory, that an account might be duly rendered in the yearly chapter. The horses were all docked of their tails and manes, that they might look ugly and unsightly. Two saddles with "humble trappings" were provided at each grange; the Procurators took care that they were made so as not to hurt the horses, that they might not incur a severe penalty. The Rule forbade any one to hurt an ox, ass, horse or foal by riding them if too heavy, or hurting them in any way in a cart or plough, so that they died or were useless for work. Brothers who hurt themselves by lifting too great a weight or by indiscreet and immoderate labour, repented on bread and water or were beaten thrice in the chapter.

No woman might enter the inclosure of the grange without the leave of the Prior, nor might any speak alone with a woman. Women "neither young nor pretty" were employed to milk the sheep in the open fields, not in houses with walls; none of the brothers came near them, but "faithful servants" watched them and corrected those who milked badly. The women who were hired for reaping had a dwelling with a door, outside the inclosure. The brother who had the charge of their food had a faithful henchman to supply them with it; he looked from a narrow peephole to see how he ministered unto them and that he spake not with them. A "mature" lay-brother watched over their labour to correct a careless word or negligent work.

Gilbert willed that his nuns should keep the strict rule of S. Benedict, following in every way the customs of the canons "so far as the weakness of their sex permitted."[46]

[46] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. lxxii.–lxxxvi., "Institutiones ad Moniales Ordinis Pertinentes."

Their daily life closely resembled that of the canons. They kept the same hours for the church services, the chapter, frater, work and reading in the cloister.

Each house was ruled by three Prioresses, who held the chapters of nuns and sisters, examined faults and adjudged penances, presided in the frater and visited the sick in the farmery, for a week in turn. On the death of a Prioress the Master sent a mandate for election; if the nuns had not chosen another Prioress within fifteen days he appointed one for them. The Sub-prioress did not succeed the Prioress without his consent and that of the Scrutatrices. The Cellaress had a Sub-cellaress to help her with the care and distribution of all the food, which she kept locked up in the Cellerarium. The Sacrist was the timekeeper of the house, and rang the bell for all the hours of the day and for chapter. She kindled a torch for the nuns when they read in the dorter between Matins and Prime in the winter, and prepared the charcoal for the thurible at Mass. In the church, she received the holy water at the turn-table window, and the "Stone of Peace" at Mass, which she carried round to the nuns and sisters, beginning to give the kiss of peace on the right side of the choir. The Precentrix, like the Precentor, was responsible for the church services; she wrote out the table of services with the names of those who were to take part in them for the week, and chose out the book for Collation. She kept the key of the cupboard containing the service-books and the library of the house, and, with the consent of the nuns, passed through the window to the canons such books as they required. In accordance with the Benedictine custom, she divided the books after chapter on the first Sunday in Lent. The nuns who had not properly read the books given to them in the last year asked for pardon. The Prioress chose a prayer for use through Lent, and appointed the Scrutatrices of the cloister to watch over reading and work. Nuns who could read had books given to them, but if the Sub-prioress saw any one sitting idle at

her book she gave her some other task. In the cloister they sat like the canons, "the face of one to the back of the other, unless two were sewing at the same garment."

The duty of the lay-sisters[47] was to attend diligently to the tasks assigned them by the nuns, "to ever show them obedience, devotion, reverence, and honour, and in all ways to help their necessities." They were never to put off their labours by waiting for the nuns to begin them. They held three chapters a week under a Prioress or a mature nun, one on Sunday morning, and the others after Compline. They attended the nuns' church for the services when they could spare time from their labour; like the lay-brothers, they said the Pater Noster and the versicles which they had been taught at the other Hours. On feast days, when the sisters did not labour, the Prioress chose out a learned nun to go with a book and speak to them "for the good of their souls and concerning the rigour of the Order." The Rule was read to them two or three times in the year.

In the double houses of the Order, the only kitchen[48] was built in the nuns' inclosure. The lay-sisters cooked for the whole community under the supervision of one nun, who served for a week at a time. The brother of the window, the brother of the hostel, and the gardener, supplied the kitchen with water, fuel, and vegetables. The Cellaress distributed from her cupboard bread, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, beans, salt, and flour. Each day the "discreet" brother of the window, in the presence of a canon, announced to the two sisters of the window, who were forbidden to be "garrulous," how much food was required, and whether there were guests or sick to be provided for. After the meal he returned all the remains through the window; the sisters were forbidden to throw them rashly away to geese, fowls, or dogs, but they might give "the very small fragments to the little chickens." In accordance with the strict rule of S. Benedict, no meat was

[47] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. lxxxvi.–lxxxviii., "Institutiones de Laicis Sororibus."

[48] Ibid., pp. lxxv., lxxvi., lxxxiv.

eaten in the Gilbertine houses except by the sick. A bishop or an archdeacon might have it if his own servants prepared it for him.[49] The lay-sisters brewed ale, sewed, washed, made thread for the cobblers and wove the wool of the house.[50] If the labour of weaving was beyond their strength the Procurators hired men to do it for them under a lay-brother; following his first precaution, S. Gilbert allowed no hired woman to have access to his nuns and sisters.[51]

The clothes of the whole Order, except the shirts and breeches of the men, were cut out and made by the women. The Rule warned the Prioresses and all others who cut them "to take care that neither cloaks, tunics, nor cowls touch the ground by their exceeding length, because he who boasts himself in this kind of garment is without doubt reprobate of God. If it is the fault of the Prioress she shall eat for two days on the floor of the chapter without table or napkin, if of the cutter she shall be beaten thrice in the chapter."[52] "Since it is written 'they who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses,' such things become not a monastery. . . . The Priors and Cellarers, and others who are over our houses shall beware that they disturb not their weak brothers, either by superfluity, or variety, in dress, shoes, or food: that murmurings and strife arise not, since the goodness of holy men is recognised by mean dress and food, and their power is strengthened."[53] New clothes were distributed at appointed times to canons and lay-brothers by the Prior and Cellarer. If any one refused a garment because he did not like the colour or thought it too short or too full, he went without it for a year. The same penalty awaited him who lost his clothes unless they were indispensable.[54]

The complex origin of the Order showed itself in the dress as well as in the Rule. The canons were known

[49] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xli.
[50] Ibid., p. lxxxvii.
[51] Ibid., p. xl.
[52] Ibid., p. lxxix.
[53] Ibid., p. xliv.
[54] Ibid., pp. xliv. and xlv.

as the "White Gilbertines," and borrowed the monastic scapular from the Cistercians; the women wore the black Benedictine habit, with the exception of a white cowl. The canons [55] had three white tunics, a pelisse—the gown now called a cassock—a white cloak (pallium) and a hood, all lined with lamb's wool, two pairs of long gaiters reaching above the knees, day and night shoes of red leather. When they laboured they laid aside the pallium for the scapular—a short working cloak. In the choir they wore white linen copes. The priests who served at the altar had surplices with hoods to cover their heads and bare necks, and at Mass a stole "in the manner of a cross" on their breast. The poor dress which S. Gilbert gave to the lay-brothers [56] consisted of three white tunics, a grey cloth cloak lined with rough skins and reaching to the thighs, a cloth cope almost down to the heels to wear in the church, and a hood covering only their shoulders and chest: "The colour of cope and hood mattered not so long as it became true religion." For herdsmen, carters, and shepherds, the Prior might provide a fuller measure of cloth; he could give black shirts to smiths and breeches to carpenters and builders. Like the canons, the lay-brothers had each two pairs of gaiters, and strong shoes made of the best leather to last a whole year; if they wore out the cobbler put new soles on them, and he watched carefully to see that no brother treated his shoes badly. Canons and brothers were allowed to have breeches, long boots, and gloves or mittens for riding. The nuns [57] had three tunics and a scapular for work, two fuller white tunics or cowls for cloister, church, chapter, frater, and dorter, a lamb's wool pelisse, a coarse cloth shift, black lamb's wool head-dresses, and coarse black cloth veils. The lay-sisters [58] had neither cowls nor scapulars, but in their stead sheepskin cloaks and long hoods. The nuns and sisters helped each other to wash

[55] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xliv. and xlv.
[56] Ibid., p. lix.
[57] Ibid., p. lxxix.
[58] Ibid., p. lxxxvii.

their clothes and those of the canons; the Prioress struck a board after chapter and announced who would do it.[59] Once a month two canons passed the dirty clothes through the turn-table window, and received them back in the same way. The lay-brothers washed their own clothes by treading them under their feet "if fullers were wanting"; sometimes the porter gave the work to "a poor man."[60]

The Rule strictly forbade the sin of simony.[61] No exaction was made for reception into the Order, but a free offering was accepted. Canons and nuns served a long noviciate. The boy[62] was received for probation at the age of fifteen, but could not become a canon until he was twenty. He was put under a Master, who instructed him in the service of the Church, the Rule of the Order, and taught him "letters." No other boys studied in the Gilbertine monasteries except novices, that the duty of teaching might not interfere with the canons' care for the nuns. Before the novice made his profession in the chapter, in the presence of the canons in their white copes, the Rule of S. Augustine and the Rule of the Order were read over to him two or three times, and carefully explained. He laid his profession on the altar, with its renunciation of all his property, devoting it to God and the Order, or granting it to those whom he left behind him in the world. After assuming the canon's dress he was presented by the whole body of canons to the nuns in their chapter. He took holy orders in due course. No girls[63] were admitted under the age of twelve. They stayed at the guest hostel for some days to test their health of mind and body. At fifteen they received the novice habit, and at eighteen they made their profession, when, under the instruction of their mistress, they had learnt the psalter, hymns, and canticles by heart. If the Prioress and the Mistress of the Novices perceived that the girl could not be taught "letters" nor to take part in the services of the church, they gave her the

[59] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxix.
[60] Ibid., p. lix.
[61] Ibid., p. xciii.
[62] Ibid., p. xliii.
[63] Ibid., p. lxxxv.

choice of becoming a lay-nun, who shared the dorter and frater of the nuns but worked when the others read in the cloister, a lay-sister, or of leaving the house. The lay-sisters[64] were professed at twenty, after serving a year's probation and receiving instruction in the Rule. The lay-brothers[65] were admitted for novice probation at twenty-four by the will of the Prior and canons. They were immediately set "to carting and other hard work." The Master of the Novices instructed them "in religion and the Rule." He taught them only the Pater Noster, the Creed, the "Miserere mei Dominus," and the verses and responses which they used at the Hours; these they learnt by heart, for no lay-brother might have a book. When the Master of the Order came to a house, he asked in chapter whether any novice desired to be admitted as a lay-brother. The brother made answer, "There is a novice to be received." The service of admission was as follows: "The Master shall inquire diligently concerning his life and character. If he is to be received, a brother shall bring him to the Master by his command. When he has asked pardon, the Master shall explain to him the harshness and rigour of the Rule. Then he shall pray for his perseverance, all shall say 'Amen,' and the novice shall go to the chapter of the nuns to make his profession. First, prostrate, he shall ask the mercy of God, of the holy Mary, the Master and the whole congregation, to make his profession and persevere in the Order until the end of his life. . . . Then he shall pray for the favour of God and perseverance in a good life. All shall answer 'Amen.' On his knees before the Master he shall place his clasped hands between the hands of the Master on a book, and with his own mouth shall renounce the devil with all his works and pomps, the world and its deeds, his own will and all property. He shall promise humility, chastity, and obedience, and that he will hold fast faithfulness, perseverance and the Rule of the brothers, with

[64] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxxvi. [65] Ibid., p. lx.

all his might, until the end of his life. Then the Master shall say a prayer for his perseverance. . . . He shall again promise obedience in a good life. Then, in the way of the Order, he shall make his vow upon the altar."

The canons and the "lettered" nuns were each divided into two bands, to sit on the right and left sides of their choirs. They received instruction in pointing from the Precentor and Precentrix in the cloister.[66] The Rule forbade all music, the organ, and every kind of chant;[67] the nuns might not sing, "for we will that like the Blessed Virgin they shall say the psalms in monotone in the spirit of humility, rather than pervert the minds of the weak like the daughter of Herodias."[68] The lay-nuns who could not read sat below the others; two "mature" nuns watched to see that no one behaved badly.[69] The whole convent went in solemn procession round the nuns' cloister on fourteen great festivals in the year—on Christmas Day, the Epiphany, the Purification, the Burial of S. Gilbert, the Annunciation, Palm Sunday, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the Assumption of the Virgin and her Nativity, the Translation of S. Gilbert, All Saints' Day, and at the burial of the dead.[70] Curtains were hung up along the sides of the cloister and across each corner, that neither men nor women should see each other. Like the Cistercians, the Gilbertines had no sculptures or "superflous" pictures in their churches, "because while attention is paid to such things, the usefulness of holy meditation and the discipline of religious gravity is often neglected."[71] If images of the Virgin and the saints were given to any house, they might be set on the altar of the nuns with the Master's permission. The altar crosses were of painted wood. There was no "multitude of lights" in the churches except on the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, on

[66] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. xlix. and lxxx.
[67] Ibid., p. xlii.
[68] Ibid., p. lxxx.
[69] Ibid., p. lxxx.
[70] Ibid., p. lxxxi.
[71] Ibid., p. l.

the three nights of Tenebræ—the service held on the fourth, fifth, and sixth nights of Passion Week—and on the Vigil of Easter, "that superfluity, vanity, and exceeding scarcity be avoided in all things."[72] Silk was never bought, but if it was given to any house, it might be used for vestments, veils for the Host and the chalice, burses, corporals, and for adorning the service-books.[73]

On Maundy Thursday, the Dies Mandati, the whole convent kept the old custom and "the commandment of the Gospel."[74] The sisters were present with the nuns in their cloister, when they washed the feet of the poor. Each Prioress was served by two sisters, who gave her water and towels; the other nuns had each one attendant. After the office in the cloister was over, the nuns and sisters withdrew to their chapter, and washed one another's feet. On Good Friday, when the service of the Veneration of the Cross was held, two canons entered the nuns' church and placed the Cross on the ground.[75] After they had gone, the nuns and sisters came in and adored the Cross, two together. When all had finished, the Sacrist struck the closed door between their choir and that of the canons, and the two canons returned to restore the Cross to the nuns' altar. The canons said the office "Super Omnia," when they and the lay-brothers had adored the Cross before their altar.

The care of the whole of the property of each house was intrusted to four Procurators, the Prior, Cellarer, and two lay-brothers—the Grainger of the home farm and another "discreet" brother.[76] They discussed everything to be done or disposed of, and strove to be at one; if three agreed, the fourth consented, or the matter was referred to the Scrutators-General or the Master. Three "religious and discreet" nuns kept all the money of the house; they had "divers keys with divers locks," that no one might

[72] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxx.
[73] Ibid., p. lxvi.
[74] Ibid., p. lxxxii.
[75] Ibid., p. lxxxiii.
[76] Ibid., pp. xxxvii.–xlii., "Capitula de Quatuor Procuratoribus."

open the cupboard which contained it.[77] The Procurators had forty shillings in hand for small purchases, to avoid frequent approach to the window to ask for money. Every purchase and sale was notified by writing to the nuns; no money could be spent, no wool, butter, cheese, or any property disposed of without their consent. The Procurators calculated the expenditure every month, and the Cellarer sent in a copy of his roll to the nuns. These accounts were shown to the Scrutators-General two or three times a year, and kept until the annual chapter, at which the expenses and profits of all the granges during the year were made known. In any necessary discussion about money at the window, the four Procurators and several "discreet" nuns were present; one spoke on each side in the third person.

The nuns had a separate fund of their own.[78] Each year a tithe of the lambs was taken, and handed over to a faithful brother who should "study to multiply them and give them the best pasture." When he had provided hurdles and winter food for them, the nuns had the rest of the money to build, or to repair their church and houses, and to buy anything needful for their labour. The Master chose out a canon and a lay-brother to buy what the nuns wanted; they sought the advice of the Procurators, and notified their expenditure to them as well as to the nuns. Any money which was left over was devoted to "the poor of Christ," to provide softer beds and coverings for them, when they came to lodge at the hostel.

The task of buying and selling for the house was assigned to a canon and a lay-brother.[79] They received the money which they needed from the nuns through the window, and set out for the fairs with a written list of the requirements of the house. They lodged at the hostel of their Order in the town, never separating to eat, lodge, or drink, unless both thought it needful and could explain the cause afterwards

[77] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxv.
[78] Ibid., p. lxxiii.
[79] Ibid., pp. lxiv., lxv.

in the chapter. The Rule forbade the lay-brother to take food for himself or his horse from any other house of religion: "He shall live of his own, and with that measure which becomes a man of his Order. He ought not to buy fish or to seek delicacies unnecessarily, or to drink wine, unless it is well watered. He shall be content with two dishes."[80] A canon guilty of the sin of drunkenness had nothing but water for forty days, "for by the intemperance of his throat he had disgraced his religion."[81] They neither bought nor sold anything for secular persons, nor was it lawful for them to sell wine to the tavern, "or, in the Teutonic tongue, to the 'tap.'" When they came back from the fair, they showed their purchases to the Prior and Cellarer before sending them through the window to the nuns. They were strictly forbidden to gossip about what they had seen in the world.

Throughout the Rule S. Gilbert showed the same loving care for the nuns. "Our brothers, the first and the last, who have vowed vows to God, and bound themselves with the chain of the profession of our religion, shall help the needs of the handmaids and brides of Christ, with all their care. If they have ministered unto them faithfully, they shall receive mercy and favour from Christ himself."[82]

[80] Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. lxiv., lxv.
[81] Ibid, p. liv. [82] Ibid., p. lxxii.

IV

RELATIONS WITH THE CROWN

THE Crown showed great favour to the Gilbertines. As the Order was English and the houses were all in England, no money went from them to the King's enemies.

The friendship of Henry II. with S. Gilbert moved him to grant liberal charters of privileges to the Order of Sempringham. As his "free and special alms," he took all the houses of the Order, and the nuns and canons, into "his own hand, custody, and protection," and enjoined that they should hold all their tenements "well and in peace, freely and quietly, wholly and fully and honourably, in wood and field, in meadows and pastures, in waters and marshes, in fishponds, in tofts and crofts, in roads and ways, and in all places within boroughs and without."[1] He bade his "justiciars, sheriffs, and all other servants," protect the Gilbertines and their property, as though it were the King's.[2]

"In city and borough, in markets and fairs, in crossing of bridges and at harbours of the sea, and in all places throughout England and Normandy," the Gilbertines and "their men" were quit of toll and all other customs.[3]

[1] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 28, charter (1). Between 1155 and 1162, granted when Thomas à Becket was Chancellor.

[2] Ibid., charter (3). Probably in 1175; *cf.* Eyton's "Itinerary," p. 194.

[3] Ibid., charter (4). Probably in 1155 or 1158; *cf.* Eyton's "Itinerary," pp. 11, 36.

They held their own courts on their manors for their tenants, free and villein, and received the amercements or fines from them.[4] Gallows were set up to hang thieves caught on their manors or elsewhere,[5] "handhaving or backbearing."[6] If their men were condemned in their court or that of another "to perpetual exile, or to loss of life or limb," the canons and nuns had "all their chattels."[7]

They were exempt from attendance at the sheriff's courts of shire and hundred, and could only be summoned to plead at the King's court, or before his chief justices.[8] However, the Gilbertines sometimes suffered, like other classes of the community, from unjust exactions of the King's servants. In fourteen years (1243–1257) the house of Malton paid £94 14s. 3d. "for gifts to sheriffs and bailiffs.[9]

Exemption from "the mercy of the forest" was a great privilege. More than twenty of the counties of England contained royal forests and were under the forest law, "drawn up rather to insure the peace of the beasts than of the king's subjects."[10] The penalties were cruel mutilation and death, and the law was stringently executed. Even the clergy were subject to it. Until they were relieved by the Great Charter and the Charter of the Forest, all the inhabitants of the forest counties were bound to attend the forest courts of woodmote and swainmote in addition to the courts of shire and hundred. The Gilbertines held lands in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, Northampton-

[4] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 28, charter (1).

[5] The Order had the rarer grant of "utfangthef," as well as that of "infangthef."

[6] Maitland and Pollock, "History of English Law," vol. i. p. 577.

[7] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 28^{v}, 10 Ric. I.

[8] Ibid., f. 28 (1), and 28^{v}, 10 Ric. I.

[9] Ibid., f. 276^{v}. For gifts to justices and officers of the Crown *cf.* "The Knights Hospitallers in England," Camden Society, Preface, p. xli.

[10] *Et seq.*, Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. i. p. 436.

shire, and Westmoreland, owing service in the forests of Kesteven, Sherwood, Pickering, Whittlewood, and Mallerstang.[11] Richard I. and his successors, who clung more tenaciously to the forest rights than to any other royal privilege, exempted them from attendance at the forest courts and from all gelds and obligations.[12] However, the Gilbertines sometimes failed to establish their immunity. At the Assize of the Forest of Pickering, held in 1336 before the itinerant justices, Richard de Willoughby and others, William, Prior of Malton, showed "that the Priors of Malton and their men had been quit in the forest from the time when the charter of Henry II. was given without interruption." They had never paid fines when their cattle had strayed into forbidden places and at forbidden times, nor when their dogs' claws were not cut.[13] The justices deemed it necessary that the court should be certified, by sworn inquisition, about this claim. The verderers and foresters declared that the Prior and his men were fined, like other men, when they took any wood or underwood in the forest beyond the Assize. They were not quit of escapes, gelds, footgelds, buckstalls, and trists, and neither the present Prior nor his men were exempt by virtue of the grant. Accordingly, the Prior was amerced for his false claim, so

[11] Malton Priory was within the bounds of the Forest of Pickering. *Cf.* North Riding Records, New Series, "Records of the Forest of Pickering," vol. i., map. Whittlewood Forest was in Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire. Mallerstang Forest was appurtenant to Pendragon Castle, near Kirkby Steven, in Westmoreland.

[12] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 28^{v}, 10 Ric. I.; f. 29^{v}, 2 John; f. 30, 11 Henry III. "Rotuli Chartarum," ed. Hardy, p. 18, 1 John.

[13] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 126. Printed in North Riding Records, New Series, vol. iii. p. 102. For a similar claim by the Prior of Ellerton, ibid., p. 108. "It is not probable that any large proportion of the burdens from which they claimed exemption existed in Pickering Forest; probably they took that opportunity of placing their rights upon record, possibly they did it from excessive caution, not caring to dispute whether the burdens existed or not." Ibid., Introduction, p. xxix.

far as his claim was not allowed.[14] There is evidence in the Cartulary of Malton that the fines of the forest courts were heavy: "In 1249 the Assizes of the Forest aggravated expenses: £16 for pleas."[15] At the Assize of the Forest of Pickering in 1334, the Prior of Malton was amerced for three offences.[16] He was convicted of taking "green hue of thorn and hazels" in Allantofts within the demesne, of the value of £1, and of carrying it to Scarborough[17] for kippering his herrings. He was fined £5 besides the value. He also took nine waggon-loads of alder in Allantofts within the demesne, of the value of 9d.; the justices inflicted a fine of 9s. besides the value. Another fine was incurred because seven young horses, belonging to the Prior of Malton, were found in Allantofts.

The Gilbertines escaped from the burden of the royal castles. They were exempt from the duty of castle-guard, from works at castles, bridges, parks, ramparts, and dykes, and from supplying wood from their chases for building.[18] Thus Malton, Marlborough, and S. Catherine's outside Lincoln had no part in garrisoning the castles in their vicinity. Other religious Orders were not so fortunate. 'The knights of the Benedictine Abbey of Abingdon were bound to guard the king's castle of Windsor, the knights of the Abbey of Peterborough his castle of Rockingham, the knights of the Abbey of St. Edmund, his castle of Norwich. The forty or fifty knights of St. Edmund's were divided into four or five troops, each of which had to guard Norwich Castle for three months in the year."[19]

[14] North Riding Records, New Series, vol. iii. p. 102.

[15] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. ff. 276, 282.

[16] North Riding Records, New Series, vol. iii. pp. 28, 40, 57.

[17] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 269. About 1250, the fishhouse was held in fee by "litel Willam" at a ferm of 6s. 8d.

[18] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 28^{v}, 10 Ric. I. "Rotuli Chartarum," p. 18, 1 John.

[19] Maitland and Pollock, "History of English Law," vol. i. p. 278.

The Order owed two most important privileges to Richard I. He granted that when the Master died, the canons and nuns should have free power to elect his successor,[20] and added that the custody of the Order, of its houses, granges, and churches, should be in the charge and rule of its Priors until the Master, the Prior of Priors, should be elected.[21] The death of a Prior gave no opportunity for outside interference with his house; the Master immediately appointed a successor, and as legal representative of the Order he himself had the custody of the lands in the brief interval.[22] Many religious houses were obliged to obtain permission to elect a new Abbot or Prior and pay a considerable sum for it; in some cases the patron chose one for them. The *Congé d'élire* was often delayed, because the revenues of the house fell to the Crown during the vacancy. In the fourteenth year of John, the King held in his hands the abbeys of Whitby, Ramsey, Abbotsbury, Shireburn, Middleton, and the priories of Canterbury and Kenilworth.[23]

Henry II. granted his charters to the Order of Sempringham as his "free and special alms." Richard I., whose purpose in granting charters was to get money for the Crusade, nevertheless confirmed his father's charter "in free alms." In 1198 his first seal was broken up, and a new one, containing the three leopards passant, was cast. Richard then repudiated all the earlier charters of his reign, and ordered that they should be brought to him for confirmation, as he needed money for his war against Philip Augustus. At Château Gaillard, on November 11, 1198, he again granted a charter "in free alms" to the Gilbertines. John confirmed his father's charter "in free alms" in September, 1199. The Abbot and Convent of Ramsey were obliged to pay a hundred pounds to the

[20] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 28ᵛ, 10 Ric. I.
[21] Ibid.; *cf.* 1 John, September, 1199.
[22] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxxii.
[23] Madox, "History of the Exchequer," vol. i. p. 312.

Exchequer for a charter granting them some of the judicial privileges which the Gilbertines possessed.[24] The Abbot and Convent of Battle paid fifteen hundred marks for the confirmation of their liberties.[25]

The King's protection was of real importance to the Order. In 1272 Henry wrote to the sheriff of Yorkshire: "The Master and Brothers of the Order of Sempringham have complained that secular women go to the houses of the Order, and stay there more than three nights, which they ought not to do without special permission from the Master. Agnes de Vescy has been to the house of Watton with a great number of women and dogs and other things, which have interfered with the devotions of the nuns and sisters." Since the houses of the Order were under his special protection, Henry bade the sheriff go in person to Agnes de Vescy, and warn her not to go to Watton or any other house without special leave from the Master of the Order, and not to trouble the nuns any further: if she would not hear the sheriff, he must prevent her from going. Henry himself sent her a letter of warning.[26] In 1276 the Prior of Alvingham complained to Edward I. that the parishioners went to church along a path which ran between the dwellings of the nuns and canons and their garden.[27] Edward at once sent down Alexander de Montfort to hold an inquiry; hearing that the parishioners could go another way without loss or harm, he allowed the Prior to close the garden path.[28]

[24] Madox, "History of the Exchequer," vol. i. p. 404, 4 John.

[25] Ibid., vol. i. p. 411, 13 John.

[26] MS. Laud, 642, f. 36.

[27] The parish church of S. Adelwold at Alvingham stood within the inclosure of the priory of S. Mary at Alvingham. The church of S. Adelwold was granted to "God, the church of S. Mary at Alvingham, and the nuns there," between 1148 and 1167. *Cf.* MS. Laud, 642, f. 10 (1). The church of Cockerington S. Mary also stood within the inclosure of the priory. The two parish churches were served by one vicar, with a deacon to help him. *Cf.* "Liber Antiquus Hugonis Wells," p. 59.

[28] MS. Laud, 642, f. 33^{v}.

In the time of Edward I., the immunities of the Gilbertines and other Orders had become a general grievance. The real popularity of a monastic Order lasted not more than a hundred years from its founding. As extreme asceticism died out, the religious became wealthy landowners, whose loyalty to their houses moved them to increase their worldly goods as well as they knew how. In this way they often came into conflict with those of the world. Their judicial privileges were a great advantage; a lawsuit with them involved considerable difficulty and expense. The jurors of the wapentake of Aswardshurn in Lincolnshire said before the justices, sent down by Edward I. on a special commission in the fourth year of his reign, "that the Order of Sempringham had liberties granted to it by the kings of England which hindered common justice and subverted the royal power, because by those liberties they would not answer any one in pleas about forbidden distraint or any other pleas before any justices except the King himself and his chief justices." [29]

The Priors foiled all attempts to deprive the Order of its privileges and immunities by an appeal to the King. By the charter of King John, the fine to the King for seizing the cattle of the Order on a common pasture for distress was fixed at ten pounds.[30]

In spite of the royal privilege, Agnes de Vescy[31] made use of the remedy of distress. She was an inveterate enemy of the Prior and Convent of Malton, and distrained them to plead at her court contrary to the charters granted

[29] Rot. Hundredorum, vol. i. p. 376.

[30] 1 John. The handiest remedy for compelling a tenant to perform services in arrear was to seize his goods for distress; the lord could resort to it without previously taking any judicial proceedings. Maitland and Pollock, "History of English Law," vol. i. p. 353.

[31] Daughter of the Count de Ferrers. Married William de Vescy, a descendant of Eustace FitzJohn, the founder of Malton.

by her predecessors."[32] In 1283 Edward I. granted a commission of oyer and terminer to his justices, John de Reigate and Geoffrey Aguillon, on the complaint of the Prior and Convent of Malton. "Although they had not committed any delinquency or been excommunicated by the authority or mandate of any ecclesiastical judge by reason whereof they might be taken or imprisoned or incur loss of goods, Agnes de Vescy, Master Richard de Pywelsdon, Roger le Clerk, John de Daville, and other ministers of the said Agnes, assaulted brothers William de Malton and William de Cauncewick, canons, and others, lay-brothers of the said house, in the common way, near the chapel of S. Leonard, Malton, took, imprisoned, and maltreated them, and on many occasions took their horses, sheep, oxen, and other cattle of the plough, and other animals, and would not let them be replevied, and detained them without food, so that the greater part died of hunger, and by public proclamation in the said Agnes's full market of Malton, prohibited any persons from selling or taking any victuals to them and from having any communication with them, and frequently took away by force victuals intended for their use, and from day to day, by various distraints, prevent them from cultivating their lands, carrying their hay or corn, or storing it in their barns."[33] The townsmen of Malton likewise distrained the Prior to make payments contrary to the charters.[34] Edward I. also redressed this grievance. On November 3, 1278, he sent a mandate to the Barons of the Exchequer: "The sheriffs, hundredsmen, and others, have been infringing the liberties of the Order of Sempringham. You are to have all the articles read before you and cause them to be observed."[35]

Like very many other lords of manors, the Gilbertine Priors were exercising the regalities of the View of Frank-

[32] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 30^{v}.
[33] Cal. Rot. Pat., 11 Ed. I., m. 76.
[34] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 31.
[35] Ibid.

pledge[36] and the Assize of Beer,[37] not in virtue of any grant from the Crown which Edward I. and his lawyers claimed to be necessary, but by no other warrant than ancient seisin. The royal inquiry into these rights caused intense annoyance. When Earl Warenne was called before the justices he produced an old rusty sword, and said, "See, my lords, here is my warrant. My ancestors came with William the Bastard and conquered their lands with the sword: with the sword I will defend them against any one who wishes to usurp them. For the King did not conquer and subdue the land by himself, but our forefathers were with him as partners and helpers."[38] In 1290 Edward conceded that continuous seisin from before the coronation of Richard I. should be an answer to "quo warranto." As men were ready to swear that the lords had held their rights from time immemorial, they kept them; but they could not acquire new ones to the detriment of the Crown. The Priors of Sempringham, Bullington, Haverholme, and the other Gilbertine houses continued to hold View

[36] "View of Frankpledge comprised not merely the right to execute the law of Frankpledge and to take the profits thus arising, but also the right to hold twice a year a court co-ordinate with the sheriff's turn, a police court, a court for the presentment of offences and the punishment of offences that fell short of felony" (Maitland and Pollock, History of English Law," vol. i. p. 580). All men were bound to combine themselves in Frankpledges—associations of ten men who were standing sureties for one another. If one broke the law the other nine held him to right; if they could not produce him, they either cleared themselves of all complicity in his flight or made good the mischief he had done. The Frankpledges were kept in perfect order and number by fine. Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. i. p. 94.

[37] "The Assize of Beer is the power of enforcing the general ordinances which from time to time fix the prices at which beer may be sold. It is common to find manorial jurors presenting as a matter of course that all the brewers, or rather alewives, of the village have brewed against the assize; whereupon all of them are amerced" (Maitland and Pollock, "History of English Law," vol. i. p. 582).

[38] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. ii. p. 115, from Walter of Hemingborough, vol. ii. p. 6, Rolls Series.

of Frankpledge in their manorial courts and to enforce the Assize of Beer.[39] As the fines which accrued to the lord from the breaking of the Assizes of Bread and Beer were a considerable source of profit, he was loath to inflict the corporal punishment prescribed by the Assizes for the fourth offence, the pillory for the baker, the tumbrel for the brewster. In 1330 the jurors at Nottingham swore that in his manors of Bramcote, Trowell, and Chilwell, the Prior of Sempringham had ever punished offenders against the Assizes of Bread and Ale by fines, that they had not pillory or tumbrel. The Prior paid forty shillings to recover his liberties.[40]

The original and most important privileges of the Gilbertines were granted to the whole Order, and made them independent in temporal matters of all save the King, as they were of all save the Pope in spiritual matters. Later local rights were obtained by individual houses, usually for a fine paid to the King's treasury.

The rights of holding markets and fairs were very profitable. The Prior of Sempringham had the right of holding a fair at the Church of Stow on the Vigil of S. John the Baptist's Day.[41] The Prior of Sixhills held a fair at Ludford.[42]

Grants of free warren, *i.e.*, rights of hunting and of snaring rabbits and birds in their woods and fields, were steadily acquired in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[43]

The Order of Sempringham had special privileges with regard to taxation. Henry II. clearly asserted that the lands of the Church, whether held by the usual temporal services or in free alms, shared the liability of the rest of

[39] Rot. Hundredorum and Placita de Quo Warranto. For references to the Gilbertine houses, *cf.* Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. 947–982, footnotes.

[40] Placita de Quo Warranto, p. 650, 3 Ed. III.

[41] Cart., 52 Henry III. [42] Ibid., 36 Henry III.

[43] Ibid., 5 Edw. III., &c.

the land.[44] The Gilbertines and their men he exempted "from all secular exaction and earthly service," from all gelds and taxes of every kind.[45] John especially mentions in his charter "from the aids of the sheriffs and their servants, from tallage and from scutage."[46] As the Order was exempt by royal charter from military service and from scutage, it is probable that benefactors who granted lands retained the duty themselves. William Fossard, lord of the township of Watton, remitted the due service of two knights.[47] The Gilbertines of Haverholme received lands at Horsford owing a fourteenth part of knight's service, and at Kikeley owing an eighth part. They rid themselves of the burden by leasing them to the Cistercian monks of Kirkstall for a rent of £4, on condition that they performed the service.[48]

The Order lost its privileges through the papal exactions of the thirteenth century. Until the pact between Crown and Papacy which followed on the submission of John, the Church had successfully resisted the attempts of the kings to tax its spiritualities—its tithes and offerings. In 1198 Hugh of Lincoln urged on the Bishops that their successors would say, "Our fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge."[49] The Popes taxed spiritualities and temporalities alike. With great astuteness they reconciled Henry III. and Edward I. to the taxes by sometimes handing over the proceeds to them. In this way the Crown gained the right to tax spiritualities as well as lands. Edward I. received the tenths from Nicholas IV. in 1288 for six years; to obtain the full amount he ordered a new assessment of the whole revenue of the Church, which was known as the Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV.[50]

[44] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. i. p. 622.
[45] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 28.
[46] 1 John.
[47] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 955.
[48] Ibid., p. 949.
[49] Rog. Hoveden, vol. iv. p. 40, Rolls Series.
[50] "P. Nich. IV. Taxatio." For the references to the Gilbertine houses, *cf.* Monasticon, vi. 2, pp. 947–982, footnotes.

From the reign of Edward I. onwards the Gilbertines voted grants to the Crown, through their representative, with the rest of the clergy in Convocation.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Order fell into great poverty.[51] On February 23, 1445, Henry VI. exempted Nicholas Resby, Master of the Order of Sempringham, and all the houses, for ever, from all aids, subsidies, tallages, and payments of every kind. He granted that they should never pay any tax contributed by the whole body of the clergy, or of the provinces of Canterbury and York separately, nor any tenths or fifteenths levied on the whole realm.[52] Four months previously, on October 26, 1444, he had granted this exemption to Watton Priory.[53]

But Henry VI. could not bind his successors "for ever." In 1522 an annual grant was to be made by the spirituality, for the King's personal expenses in France for the recovery of that crown. The grant of the Prior of Sempringham was fixed at £40,[54] that of the Prior of Chicksand at £20.

From the thirteenth century the grants of the clergy were collected by some of their own number whom the King appointed. Two usually served in each diocese. In 1294 the Prior of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln was appointed to collect the tenth in that diocese;[55] he fulfilled the duty for many years.[56] The work was no sinecure. The money was sometimes collected in moieties, sometimes in thirds; it was kept in a safe place until required by the King. In 1282 the Prior of Watton complained that, "whereas he had been appointed to collect the tenth in the diocese of York, and having distrained therefore in many cases, certain persons of the county of

[51] *Cf.* Chapter VI. p. 153.

[52] Rot. Pat., 23 Hen. VI., p. 1, m. 4.

[53] Ibid., m. 20.

[54] Calendar of Letters and Papers, vol. iii. part ii. p. 1048.

[55] Cal. Rot. Pat., 22 Ed. I., m. 8.

[56] Ibid., 24 Ed. I., m. 22; 32 Ed. I., m. 28; 1 Ed. II., p 2, m. 13, &c.

York entered his free chase in Ravenstonedale in the county of Westmoreland and its confines, and took deer, and carried away trees therefrom, and depastured their cattle in his corn and meadows, and upon his attempting to impound the said cattle assaulted his men." [57] He further complained that "as he and his men were taking the said tenth to York and passing through the town of Leghening, they were assaulted and the money was taken from them." [58]

It was practically impossible to refuse loans to the King, though the Order must sometimes have been put to considerable inconvenience in parting with the money. Edward II. frequently applied to the Master of Sempringham in his financial difficulties. In June, 1310, he asked him to aid him, "by way of loan," with victuals for his Scotch expedition, and "to take his request so great and so hastily made to heart and to perform it willingly, as he esteems the honour and profit of the King and his realm." [59] In 1313 he asked for a loan of a thousand marks.[60] In March, 1315, the loan demanded from the Order for the purchase of provisions for the expedition to resist the Scotch invasion was two thousand pounds,[61] although the whole revenue of the Order scarcely exceeded three thousand.[62]

The Gilbertines suffered with the rest of the nation under the burden of Purveyance. The army of purveyors, who accompanied the King and his court wherever they went, took provisions and demanded men's services, their horses and carts, even when they were in the midst of ploughing, paying but little or nothing for them. Under the three Edwards the evil was at its height. Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter of remonstrance to

[57] Cal. Rot. Pat., 10 Ed. I., m. 10 d. [58] Ibid., m. 9 d.
[59] Cal. Rot. Cl., 3 Ed. II., m. 5 d.
[60] Parliamentary Writs, vol. ii. part ii. p. 66, No. 9.
[61] Cal. Rot. Cl., 8 Ed. II., m. 12 d.
[62] Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ed. I., m. 24, "P. Nich. Taxatio."

Edward III., told how the poor trembled at his coming; they hid their cocks and hens, or killed and ate them. He himself shook all over with fear when he heard the first horn proclaim the King's arrival at his gate.[63] The commissariat and transport services for the Welsh and Scotch wars were provided by Purveyance. On October 16, 1277, Edward I. sent a mandate from Shrewsbury "to all bailiffs and others not to take from the Master and Prior of Sempringham against their will any of the grain which they have for their support, although the King has commanded provision of grant to be made in the various counties of the kingdom for himself and his army in Wales; and to restore to them whatever grain has been so taken already."[64] On February 10, 1316, the Prior of Malton obtained royal protection for the attorneys whom he was sending to transport corn from the manors belonging to Malton in Lincolnshire, and to buy corn there for their sustenance on account of the losses they had suffered in the North from the attacks of the Scots.[65] A few years before, some of the corn of Malton and Watton had been seized by the purveyors for the Scotch wars.[66] In 1314 Edward II. granted one year's protection to the Prior of Watton, who represented that "certain persons, feigning that they are purveyors of victuals and divers other things for the King's use, frequently come to the priory and its granges, and there take in the King's name divers animals, carts, corn and other victuals."[67] Thirty carts, each with four horses and sufficient gear, from Lincolnshire, Cambridge, and Huntingdon, were to be assembled at the Priory of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln on August 10, 1308.[68] In 1333 the Prior of Sempringham received a mandate to send to York by the morrow of the Ascension

[63] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. ii. p. 423 n.; ex. MS. Bodley, 624.

[64] Cal. Rot. Pat., 5 Ed. I., m. 4.

[65] Ibid., 9 Ed. II., p. 1, m. 5.

[66] Ibid., 4 Ed. II., m. 6.

[67] Ibid., 8 Ed. II., m. 25.

[68] Cal. Rot. Cl., 1 Ed. II., m. 1.

at the latest, a stout cart, well bound with iron, and five horses for the King's service against the Scots.[69]

"That that which concerns all might be approved by all, Edward I. summoned the Master of Sempringham,[70] with the archbishops and bishops, abbots and priors, earls and barons, and representatives of shires and towns, to the great Parliament, which met at Westminster on November 13, 1295. In that year the King granted a license for the Prior and Convent of Sempringham to stop a lane called 'Cheke Lane,' in the parish of S. Sepulchre's in the suburb of London, adjoining their houses on the west side, and to enclose the same for the enlargement of their site."[71] There, not far from Smithfield, the Master of Sempringham lodged when business drew him to London.[72] He was regularly summoned to Parliament until 1332;[73] in 1341 he pleaded that he ought not to be summoned, and was exempt for the future.[74] Attendance at Parliament was so great a burden and expense that the abbots and priors diminished in number from eighty, in 1301, to twenty-seven, the normal number after 1341.[75]

The right of sending troublesome political persons and old servants to monasteries to receive their maintenance was largely exercised by the three Edwards. On November 11, 1283, five weeks after the execution of David, brother of Prince Llewellyn, who was killed at Builth the year before, Edward I. wrote from Ludlow to the Prior and Prioress of Alvingham and their convents, asking them to admit to their Order and habit the children of Llewellyn and David: "having the Lord

[69] Cal. Rot. Pat., 7 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 13.

[70] Parliamentary Writs, vol. i. p. 30, No. 6, p. 32, No. 1.

[71] Cal. Rot. Pat., 23 Ed. I., m. 18.

[72] Stow, "Survey of London," p. 142, ed. 1876. Cal. State Papers. vol. xvi. p. 715, 32 Henry VIII.

[73] Parliamentary Writs, vol. ii. part iii. p. 1420. Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. iii. p. 457, note.

[74] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. v. p. 248.

[75] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. iii. p. 459.

before our eyes, pitying also their sex and age, that the innocent and unwitting may not seem to atone for the iniquity and ill-doing of the wicked, and contemplating especially the life of your Order."[76] Wencilian, daughter of Llewellyn, became a nun of Sempringham, her cousin Gladaus a nun of Sixhills ; Wencilian died in 1337, after fifty-four years of life in the Order.[77] Four years after their admission, Edward issued a mandate to Thomas de Normanvill "to go to the places where the daughters of Llewellyn and of David his brother, who have taken the veil in the Order of Sempringham, are dwelling, and to report upon their state and custody by the next parliament."[78] He allowed Sempringham Priory to acquire certain lands in mortmain because he had charged it with Wencilian.[79] When Edward III. stayed some days at Sempringham in 1327, he granted Wencilian a yearly

[76] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 959 ; ex. MS. Laud, 642, f. 42.

[77] Peter of Langtoft, Chronicle, ed. Hearne, vol. ii. p. 243 :—

"Now is Leulyn forsuorn, and his hede of smyten,
His heritage is lorn fro his heyres ye wyten
More than a yere beforn that he lauht this schame,
A douhter was him born, Wencilian hir name.
In her credille ying tille Inglond scho cam,
Thorgh conseile of the Kyng was brouht to Sempyngham,
And there was ssho enne four and fifty yere,
Norised with Wynne, nunne and seculere.
Now haf we new tateles, dede is Wencilian,
Leulyn douhter of Wales, that on Inglond ran.
Hir dede was mykelle ment, for scho was fulle curteys,
Among the ladies gent, the loss of her so seys.
The seuent day of Juny, Whitson even that tyme,
Died that lady, bituex undron and prime,
The date of Creste pundred, thus many yeres euen,
A thousand and three hundred thritty yere and seven.
Her cosyn dame Gladous, of David douhter born,
A nunne of Sixille hous died a yere beforn.
Of Wencilian wrote I here next Leulyn story,
Scho was his douhter dere, to bere him company."

[78] Cal. Rot. Pat., 17 Ed. I., m. 9.

[79] Ibid., 30 Ed. I., m. 34.

pension of twenty pounds for life,[80] a very liberal allowance compared with the payments made by Edward I. for the Scottish captives. In 1305 the sheriff of York paid Margery, daughter of Robert Bruce, dwelling by the King's order in the house of Watton, threepence a day and a mark yearly for her robe so long as she stayed there.[81] The like sum was paid by the sheriff of Lincoln to Christina, wife of the late Christopher de Seton, enemy and rebel, dwelling at Sixhills.[82]

Old servants of the Crown had the necessaries of life in food, drink, and clothing. Edward II. sent Agnes Capoun, who had served him and his father to Chicksand,[83] William Dautre to Bullington.[84] Men-at-arms, who had grown old fighting in the king's wars, ended their days in monasteries: in 1317 Richard de Whitchurch, "arblaster," was sent to Malton,[85] Robert de Tadcaster, "footman" to Watton.[86] There is no evidence to show whether any duties in the monastery accompanied these privileges, or how the King's old servants passed their time. The presence in the house of those who were not of the Order, and had taken no vow of obedience, may have been unfavourable to the maintenance of discipline.

Provision for the King's nominees was a tax on the resources of a house. The Prior and Convent of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln had to maintain within a few years Hugh de la Chaumbre, sent by Edward. II. in place of Matthew le Ussher, received at the request of the late king;[87] Christiana de Hauville, "whose husband and three sons were slain by the Scotch rebels, and her lands and goods totally destroyed and wasted by them, until she be able to live of her own again";[88] Eleanor d'Arcy sent at

[80] Cal. Rot. Pat., 1 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 27.
[81] Ibid., 35 Ed. I., m. 29.
[82] Ibid., 35 Ed. I., m. 29.
[83] Cal. Rot. Cl., 3 Ed. II., m. 13 d.
[84] Ibid., 11 Ed. II., m. 22 d.
[85] Ibid., 10 Ed. II., m. 5 d.
[86] Ibid., 10 Ed. II., m. 17 d.
[87] Ibid., 4 Ed. II., m. 11 d. Two months later he was sent on to the Hospital of S. Mary Magdalene at Lincoln.
[88] Ibid., 12 Ed. II., m. 20 d.

the instance of Henry de Beaumont, lord of Folkingham ;[89] Simon de Streche, a Templar of the late Preceptory at Donington, sent by John, Bishop of Lincoln, to do penance ; for him the Prior received fourpence a day, which he got with difficulty from William de Spanby, keeper of the fruits and profits of the late Templars' church of Donnington.[90]

[89] Cal. Rot. Cl., 7 Ed. II., m. 6 d.
[90] Ibid., 7 Ed. II., m. 18.

V

RELATIONS WITH POPES AND BISHOPS

AFTER the confirmation of the Rule by Eugenius III. in 1148,[1] the Order of Sempringham was put under the "protection" of the Papacy.

The greater number of the bulls copied by the canons into the Cartularies of Malton[2] and Alvingham,[3] and enrolled on the Papal Registers,[4] were sent to the Master and the Order of Sempringham. However, it is probable that the Priors and Convents of the different houses each obtained a bull, similar to that sent by Alexander III., in 1178, "to his beloved sons, Roger, Prior of the blessed Mary of Malton, and the other brothers, canons and lay-brothers, present and future, professed to live the regular life according to the Institutes of the Order of Sempringham."[5] He confirmed the possessions—churches, lands and mills—"which they hold justly and canonically, now or in the future, by the concession of pontiffs, by the generosity of kings or princes, by the offering of the faithful or in other just ways with the favour of God." He decreed that it should be unlawful "for any man to disturb the said

[1] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xiii.

[2] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi., British Museum.

[3] MS. Laud, 642, Bodleian Library, written in 13th and 14th centuries.

[4] Calendar of Entries in Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, ed. Bliss.

[5] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 7, 19 Alexander III. (1159–1181).

S. MARY'S, OLD MALTON.

[*Facing p.* 67.

church (of the blessed Mary at Malton), to take away its possessions, to hold them, to diminish them or to harass them by any vexations," and enjoined that "all things belonging to those for whose governance and support they were granted" should be kept "untouched for their uses; saving the authority of the apostolic see, and the canonical justice of the bishop of the diocese." A solemn warning concluded the bull: "If, therefore, in the future, any one, ecclesiastic or secular, shall knowingly strive to go against this charter, which we have drawn up, he shall be admonished twice or thrice: unless he shall correct his fault, so far as he can, with worthy satisfaction, he shall lack the dignity of honour, and shall know that he is accused before the divine judge of the iniquity, which he has worked, and shall be shut out from the most sacred body and blood of God and of our Lord Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and shall lie under the extreme judgment of divine vengeance."

The right to acquire new possessions removed all scruples about the incompatibility of wealth with the monastic life. Yet S. Gilbert "refused and utterly despised many things, for he ever loved honourable poverty."[6]

Successive Popes decreed that the Rule should be kept as it was when S. Gilbert lived, but they allowed any necessary changes to be made "by the counsel and consent of the greater and wiser part of the Order."[7] The Institutes on the observance of which they laid special stress were that the nuns should perform their own duties, and keep all their privileges. There should be one cook and one kitchen for all; money, gold, silver and cloth should be in the charge of the nuns; they should have their tithe of lambs set apart for their profit; the prioresses should be consulted in the election of the Master. Neither lands, churches, nor benefices should be given to any one without the common and general assent of the older and wiser canons and nuns of the house. The lay-brothers should be

[6] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xi. [7] Ibid., p. xx.

submissive and obedient to the canons and priors in all things, nor should they dare to usurp power in the house or over money for themselves except what the prior should enjoin upon them. The power of ruling divine worship should be in the hands of the Master and priors. They might receive any one fleeing from the world to make profession and could refuse whom they would.[8]

When a general interdict was laid upon the land, the Gilbertines might hold their services in low voices, without ringing of bells and with closed doors, on condition that they shut out those who were excommunicate and under the interdict.[9]

In 1220, Honorius III. wrote "to the Master and brothers of the Order of Sempringham: 'You have asked of us that we shall grant, that, when a Master dies, another shall be substituted for him, according to the Institutes of the Order. Immediately on his election he shall take the same oath which Roger took to observe the Institutes of the Order drawn up by the blessed Gilbert. . . . Those, who deny him obedience and reverence, shall be bound with the chain of excommunication, and no one shall appeal from him to escape the discipline of the Rule. You have asked also that we shall order that the priors hold the same way in riding and other expenses, as they did in the time of S. Gilbert. They each shall have a canon to accompany them. They shall not take with them servants and baggage-horses unless they are going to remote parts, and then they shall have one horse to carry their necessaries. They shall not use silver cups or other pompous vessels. You desired also that those too shall be bound with the chain of excommunication who, being professed of your Order, take exception to the constitutions drawn up in the general chapter for the reformation of the Order. . . . You asked further that all of the Order, who hold property, sowers of discord among the

[8] Monasticon, vi., 2, p. 960, ex. MS. Laud, 642, f. 1, "ad instar predecessorum nostrorum." [9] Ibid. and MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 8.

brothers, accusers of the brothers, those who wish to get obedience by secular power or wicked simony, shall be excommunicated every year in the general chapter. You asked also that the Master and priors shall not dare to change the liberties or institutions which we have granted and confirmed. You asked also that, in the houses of the nuns, the number fixed by the blessed Gilbert shall be kept, and that the nuns shall have a tenth of the sheep each year for their necessities, as Gilbert instituted, and Alexander confirmed. We therefore, desiring the gain of your Order, will and decree that all these things be observed, just as you hold them from the institution of the Order.' " [10]

The ingenuity of the medieval lawyer, who strove to infringe the liberties of the Order, " by occasion of words," made separate bulls necessary in some instances. The Curia profited. Gregory IX. wrote " to the Master and brothers of the Order of Sempringham : ' It has been shown to us that clerks and laymen, not so much pursuing their own justice as damnably bent on persecuting you, have caused you to be maliciously cited by apostolic letters more than two days' journey from your house, that, wearied by letters and expenses, you will yield, or be forced to make a damnable compact. Willing, therefore, to take counsel for your peace, we grant that you cannot be drawn by apostolic letters to plead a cause at a place more than two days' journey from your house.' " [11] In the preamble of a bull granted in 1248 to Alvingham, Innocent IV. wrote : " Some, restricting the apostolic indulgence to the principal house of Sempringham, its Master and brothers, interpret that it is not for the benefit of the other houses and brothers of the Order. Moved by your supplications we decree that all the houses, priors, and brothers shall have the same indulgence." [12]

[10] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 9, 4 Honorius III. (1216–1227).
[11] Ibid., f. 12, 9 Gregory IX. (1227–1241).
[12] MS. Laud, 642, f. 4, Innocent IV. (1243–1254).

The Prior of Malton obtained a similar bull from Innocent IV.[13]

The most valuable of the papal privileges was that which made the Order independent of all ecclesiastical authority save that of the Pope himself. The Gilbertines were exempt from the visitation of the bishop, and of the archdeacons, his official representatives.[14] The duty of correcting anything amiss was intrusted to the Master,[15] or to a special legate sent by the Pope for the purpose.[16] In 1234 Gregory IX. excluded legates also.[17]

The early friendship between the bishops and the Gilbertines was changed into hostility before the end of the twelfth century. A genuine desire to set every part of their dioceses in order prompted the bishops to attempt a visitation of the houses under the Master of Sempringham.

Complaints of episcopal interference reached Celestine III., who sent a bull "to the archbishops and all bishops throughout England: 'It has come to us, that there are some among you who, by occasion of words, saving the canonical justice of the bishop of the diocese, are trying to infringe and diminish the liberties and immunities granted by the apostolic see to our beloved children the canons and nuns of the Order of Sempringham at their own will. . . . Since it is but little to grant privileges and indulgences, unless we will protect them, we must not endure that anything be done by way of fraud, or that they be violated in any way by the presumption of any one. Wherefore by the writings of the apostolic see we order and command you that ye be content with your own right, and suffer the canons and nuns to hold their chapters

[13] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 14. The bull is undated.

[14] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 960.

[15] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 11^{v}, 8 Gregory IX., "concessum a felicis recordacionis, Alexandro, Lucio, Innocencio et Honorio, Clemente, Celestino." Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 493, 1 Nicholas IV. (1288–1292), p. 90, 7 Honorius III.

[16] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 11^{v}, 8 Gregory IX. [17] Ibid.

and to have their liberties and immunities untouched, without let or hindrance.'" [18]

In 1221, Honorius III. wrote "to the Archbishop of York, and all the clergy in the province of York: 'We have learnt, not without grief of heart and much disturbance, that, in most parts, ecclesiastical censure is dissolved and canonical strictness is relaxed, so that the religious, and those who have privileges from the Papacy, suffer wrongs and rapine on all sides from malefactors. . . . Especially the Master and brothers of Sempringham complain of frequent wrongs, through daily defect of justice, and have asked us to rouse all of you by our letters. Some have irreverently invaded their lands, . . . others have wrongly taken tithes. . . . If they are laymen, excommunicate them publicly and with lighted candles; if clerks, regular canons, or monks, remove them from their office and benefice.'" [19] He deputed the three Cistercian Abbots of Fountains, Rievaulx, and Byland, "to excommunicate those who molest the Master and brothers of Sempringham. They have shown to us that archbishops, bishops, archdeacons and their officials, pay no attention to our privileges and indulgences." [20]

In 1235, the Order appealed successfully to Gregory IX. against Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, who, in the partisan words of Matthew Paris, "was deemed a general persecutor of the religious, especially of those whose privileges he could oppose." [21] Gregory replied: "Hearing that some archbishops, bishops, their archdeacons and officials, and other general visitors sent from the apostolic see, have wished to usurp an unlawful and unusual jurisdiction over you, although hitherto they have never been wont to come to your houses, for the purpose of visitation, we strictly forbid that any one dare to molest you against

[18] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 8^{v}, 2 Celestine III. (1191–1198).
[19] Ibid., f. 9^{v}, 5 Honorius III.
[20] Ibid., f. 10.
[21] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. v. p. 40, Rolls Series.

our prohibition and indulgence."[22] Six years later, Gregory sent a mandate "to Otto, Cardinal of S. Nicholas in Carcere, papal legate, to compel the Master and Brethren to pay due obedience to the Bishop of Lincoln."[23] Gold was all powerful in the Curia. A further appeal from the Order resulted in another exemption."[24]

In 1246 Innocent IV. granted that the Order might receive a bishop into their houses and show him hospitality as charity without thereby giving him any rights over them.[25] When the news came of a bishop's approach, all the canons and brothers were summoned to the choir by a bell. They went forth in procession, two and two, and stood outside the gates of the monastery. As the bishop drew near they fell on their knees. The prior kissed his hand and gave him the holy water. A short service in the church, and a sermon from the bishop in the chapter, took place before he went to his lodging.[26]

The Gilbertines struggled repeatedly against the bishops' visitation. In the characteristic way of the Middle Ages, the bishops strove to break through the privilege of the Order, and to establish a precedent for the rights which they claimed as due to their office. In 1328 John XXII. sent "a commission and mandate to Henry, Bishop of Lincoln, to annul the sentence of excommunication issued by the President of the Order of S. Gilbert against Roger de Stanes, canon of the Priory of Sempringham, on certain unsworn charges made against him which he denied on oath."[27] In 1345 "Queen Philippa, Henry, Earl of Lancaster and Leicester, Steward of England, his son Henry, Earl of Derby, Thomas, Earl of Warwick, Marshall of England, and Hugh Despenser, the king's kinsman, lord

[22] MS. Cotton Claudius, D. xi. f. 11^{v}, 8 Gregory IX.
[23] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i., p. 189, 14 Gregory IX.
[24] Ibid., p. 284, 10 Innocent IV.
[25] Ibid., p. 230, 4 Innocent IV.
[26] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lviii.
[27] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. ii. p. 272, 12 John XXII. (1316–1334).

of Glomer and Morgan," signified to Clement VI. "that although the Master, priors, brethren, and sisters of the Order of Sempringham, immediately subject to the Roman Church, are exempt from ordinary or legatine authority, nevertheless certain ordinaries endeavour to enforce jurisdiction over them. The aforesaid persons therefore pray the Pope to confirm the said privilege and exemption, and to declare the said Order to be free from all ordinary jurisdiction for ever."[28] Clement VI. granted "full exemption to the Master, priors, canons, lay-brothers, nuns, and sisters, present and future, and to the monasteries."[29]

The Gilbertines were dependent on the bishops "for the ordination of their canons, and the benediction of their nuns." In 1256 Alexander IV. granted that "any catholic prelate" might perform the function, "should the bishop of the diocese make difficulties about doing it."[30] Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, blessed fifty-two nuns of Sempringham, twenty-five of Haverholme, five of Cattley, and one General Scrutatrix, at Sempringham on April 17, 1319.[31] In 1326 William de Melton, Archbishop of York, blessed fifty-three nuns at Watton.[32] The Order probably made some attempt to be rid of this dependence. In 1363, John,[33] Bishop of Lincoln, petitioned Urban V. to maintain the rights of his see. "Whereas," he urged, "the Prior (*i.e.*, Master) of Sempringham, who has many houses of nuns to whom the Bishop of Lincoln was used to give benediction, and to consecrate the said nuns, is endeavouring surreptitiously to obtain from the Pope the right to bear the mitre, ring, and pastoral staff, and to consecrate the nuns, the Bishop prays the Pope to revoke whatever has been done;

[28] Calendar of Petitions to the Pope, vol. i. (1342–1419), p. 103.

[29] Ibid., p. 103.

[30] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 332, 2 Alexander IV. (1254–1261).

[31] "Le Livre de Reis de Engleterre," p. 337, Rolls Series.

[32] Burton, Monasticon Eboracense, p. 412, "ex Registro Willelmi de Melton."

[33] John Bokyngham, 1363–1398.

especially since it would be to the prejudice of the diocesan, and also other prelates, without comparison greater than the Prior, and peers of the realm, would disdain to take a lower place in congregations, and at burials of the dead." [34] The Pope bade the Cardinal of Terouanne Morinen hear the cause.[35] There is no evidence that the Master of Sempringham ever obtained the rights of a mitred abbot.

The Order was exempt from "aids and all unaccustomed exactions from archbishops, bishops, archdeacons,[36] or other deans, or all ecclesiastical persons—especially for taking any oath in the churches—except only from synodal and episcopal dues which are owed by the law of the Canons." [37] In the Accounts of Malton, extant from 1244 to 1257, the fixed sum paid for synodal dues, and the archdeacon's expenses, amounted to £2 6s. 2d.[38] In all the ordinations of vicarages in their "appropriated" churches in the diocese of Lincoln, the houses of the Sempringham Order were compelled to provide the archdeacon's lodging and to pay the synodal dues.[39]

The parish churches, of which the Gilbertines had the advowsons, or which they held "ad proprios usus," caused friction beteen them and the bishops. After the Norman Conquest, monastic patrons frequently gave the parish

[34] Calendar of Petitions to the Pope, vol. i. p. 413. Apparently John Bokingham was very hostile to the Order. In 1373 Gregory X. sent a mandate to Edward III. not to allow the Bishop of Lincoln to oppress or burden the Master of Sempringham. The Master had complained to him. *Cf.* Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. vii. p. 29.

[35] Calendar of Petitions to the Pope, vol. i. p. 413.

[36] The archdeacons had the charge of the fabrics of the parish churches, and saw that everything needful for the celebration of the services and the sacraments was provided. They visited the clergy in their homes once or twice a year. The clergy were bound to provide a lodging for the archdeacon and a moderate suit, as well as a certain sum for their expenses. *Cf.* "Register of Walter Gray, Archbishop of York," Preface, p. xxi., Surtees Society.

[37] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 960. MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 7, 19 Alexander III.

[38] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 276^{v}.

[39] "Liber Antiquus Hugonis Wells," ed. A. W. Gibbon, *passim.*

churches on their manors to religious houses, of which they were founders or benefactors.[40] Their intention was good: an abbot or prior would be better for the church than a lay-rector, and the religious house would profit by the surplus revenues. But the weakness, as well as the strength of monasticism, lay in the corporate spirit, which made all else subservient to its own interests. The results were very unsatisfactory. The churches were taken out of the bishops' control, and often scandalously neglected. The house served the church by one of their number: the monk or canon, suddenly taken from the cloister to have the cure of souls for a space, rather naturally did not prove a good parish priest; a poorly paid clerk was no better. The fabric fell into disrepair, and the poor were neglected. The remedy was hard to find. The Council of Westminster, summoned by Anselm in 1102, drew up a constitution "that monks do not accept of churches without the bishop's consent, nor so rob those, which are given them, of their revenues, that the priests, who serve them, be in want of necessaries." Gifts of churches to the religious continued. At the Lateran Council in 1179, Alexander III. decreed that the bishops should require the monasteries to assign to the vicars a sum sufficient for paying episcopal dues and enjoying an honest maintenance, and that vicars should not be removed nor their stipends changed at the will of the appropriator or rector. Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, enforced the canon at the Council of Westminster in 1200 by directing "all the religious to present priests to the churches, which they hold not by an absolute right, who shall answer to the bishops for the care of the people and account to the religious for the temporals."

The rural deans held an inquisition into the value of rectories, and the due portion to be assigned to vicarages. They made a return to the bishop, who approved and confirmed the acts of their chapters, or altered them as he

[40] *Et seq.*, "Liber Antiquus Hugonis Wells," ed. A. W. Gibbon, Preface viii.–x.

thought fit. The amount was entered in the bishop's register. The vicar usually received about one-third of the profits of the benefice, derived from altar dues and tithes, as well as a house and some glebe.[41]

The work of creating perpetual vicarages went on busily in the thirteenth century. Many of the churches appropriated to the Gilbertines were numbered among the three hundred vicarages which Hugh of Wells [42] ordained in the diocese of Lincoln. In several instances the Prior and Convent owned the parish church, [43] which sometimes stood within the inclosure of the priory. The vicarage in the Church of Sempringham, which belonged to the Master and Convent of Sempringham, was thus ordered: "The vicar shall have, in the name of the vicarage, eleven quarters of corn to be paid at reasonably appointed times, and he shall have two loaves of the serving-men's bread each day through the year for the need of his servant. Likewise he shall have on All Saints' Day 1d., on Christmas Day 3d., on Easter Day 2d., on the Day of the Feast of the Church 1d. He shall have also 15 shillings of silver at two terms. The Prior shall find a horse for the vicar, whenever he shall go to the chapter, and to the synod, or be summoned for other business of the church. The Prior and Convent shall provide the vicar with a dwelling-house. They shall provide lodging for the archdeacon, and other burdens, ordinary and extraordinary, they shall bear for ever. The vicarage is worth 60 shillings."[44] "For the vicarage in the churches of Alvingham and of Cockerington

[41] Dr. Cutts, "Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages in England," p. 101. The religious house usually took the large tithe of corn, and left to the vicar the small tithes, *i.e.*, of wool, lambs, calves, pigs, and geese; pears, apples, and other fruit of trees and orchards; flax, hemp, fallen wood, wax, honey, and cheese.

[42] 1209–1235. "The persecutor of monks, the hammer of canons and all religious." *Cf.* Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. iii. p. 306, Rolls Series.

[43] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 311, 1 Alexander IV.

[44] "Liber Antiquus Hugonis Wells," p. 54.

S. ADELWOLD'S, ALVINGHAM, AND S. MARY'S, NORTH COCKERINGTON, FORMERLY S. MARY'S, ALVINGHAM.
[*Facing p.* 107.

S. Mary, because the mother churches are both in one and the same churchyard, within the inclosure of the priory of Alvingham, and have ever been wont to be served by one chaplain, and by one canon of the priory, it is provided, by the grace of the Lord Bishop, that one vicar shall be set over the same, and shall have the cure of souls in each parish, and shall receive, in the name of the vicarage, six quarters of corn, and three quarters of barley, and shall have a mark of silver a year, from the said Prior and Convent, and offerings on the greater Feasts, viz., on All Saints' Day 2d., on Christmas Day 6d., on Easter Day 4d., on the Days of the Feasts of the Churches, 2d., 1d. in each parish, for weddings 1d. The Prior and Convent shall provide lodging for the archdeacon, and other burdens, ordinary and extraordinary, they shall bear for ever. Moreover they shall find for the vicar a suitable deacon, at their own expense, and a good manse sufficient for his needs. The vicarage is worth 6 marks." [45]

Robert Grosseteste,[46] "the unwearied persecutor of monks," [47] sought a more effectual and speedy remedy for the neglected churches of his diocese than the creation of vicarages. He obtained a papal letter, which enabled him to recover benefices from the religious, if they could not show him the charters in which the Chapter of Lincoln had consented to the gift of the advowson or to the appropriation.[48] Those who, like the Gilbertines, had exemptions from the bishop's visitation, appealed to Innocent IV. In the quaint words of Matthew Paris, "they wisely bought peace for themselves, according to the ethical precept, 'under an unjust law seek the help of a judge.'" [49] The Curia, "like an abyss," [50] swallowed up their gold, and freed them from Grosseteste's interference.

[45] "Liber Antiquus Hugonis Wells," p. 59. [46] 1235–1253.

[47] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. v. p. 96, Rolls Series.

[48] "Roberti Grosseteste Epistolæ," ed. Luard, Preface, p. lxxi., Rolls Series, 1249.

[49] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. v. p. 97, Rolls Series.

[50] Ibid., p. 96.

Though Grosseteste was about seventy-five years of age and always in bad health, he set out, in Lent, 1250, on the weary journey to Innocent IV., at Lyons. "After much useless expense and labour he came to the Pope in confusion, and said, 'Holy Father, I blush at failing in my purpose, because those, whom I thought I had subdued, depart freely to my confusion.' The Pope is said to have answered with a stern countenance, 'Brother, what is that to thee? Thou hast freed thy soul; we have done them favour. Is thine eye evil because I am good?' The Bishop, sighing in himself, but yet loud enough to be heard by the Pope, exclaimed, 'O money, money, how powerful thou art, especially at the court of Rome.' The Pope, in a rage, replied: 'O you English, you are the most miserable of men; each one of you gnaws and strives to impoverish the other. How many of the religious subject to you, and your own sheep and countrymen and friends, intent on prayer and hospitality, have you laboured to oppress, that you may satisfy your tyranny and cupidity from their property, and you might enrich others, and perhaps foreigners.' And thus the Bishop departed in confusion, and decried by all as shameless."[51] The story told by Matthew Paris,[52] on the evidence of some one who brought the news to S. Alban's,[53] has been accepted as a proof that Grosseteste utterly failed in his purpose. Innocent, however, practically agreed to his suggestions about vicarages.[54]

In the province of York, the Archbishop, Walter Gray,[55] worked hard to remedy the evil. His was no light task. The struggle with the regulars came at the time when the burden of providing for the unpopular papal nominees pressed most heavily upon him. As the benefices belonging to the religious fell vacant, his officials investigated

[51] *Cf.* note 48.

[52] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. v. p. 97, Rolls Series.

[53] F. S. Stevenson, "Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln," pp. 282, 283. [54] Ibid. [55] 1216–1255.

their claims to them. Thomas, clerk of John, Archdeacon of Cleveland, held inquisition, at the mandate of Walter, Archbishop of York, in 1245, in the chapel of Rydale at Kirkby Moorside, about the church of Brompton in Pickeringlith, and stated, as the result, that the right of presentation belonged to the Prior and Convent of Malton "without litigation or any contradiction."[56] In the same year the Archdeacon of the East Riding held inquisition, and found that the vacant church of Langton was in the gift of the Prior and Convent of Malton.[57] Prior Adam, the Convent of Malton, and the Archbishop ratified the ordination of the vicarage of Brompton. Richard de Vescy, canon of Beverley, was rector of Brompton, and appointed John Harding, clerk, as vicar: "The said John shall hold the vicarage of the church and chapel, with all its appurtenances, with tithes and offerings, saving only the tithe of corn of the whole parish of Brompton belonging to the said Richard, and the said John shall have the tithe of fifteen bovates in the territory of Snaington, saving to Robert, clerk, the portion which he holds in his chapel of Snaington. The said John shall answer about episcopal matters, namely about synodal dues, and the Archdeacon's lodging."[58] The Archbishop confirmed to the Prior and Convent of Mattersay a pension of two marks and a half, which they drew from the church of Misney.[59] He granted the nuns of Watton an annual payment of five marks out of the church of Santon, for a pittance, and made them patrons of the whole church, of which they held only a moiety.[60]

Vicars often appealed successfully for an increase of their income. In 1247 Innocent IV. forbade the archbishop, archdeacons, and chapters of York to increase the taxation of the churches belonging to the Master and

[56] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 41ᵛ.
[57] Ibid., f. 42.
[58] Ibid., f. 41.
[59] Register of Walter Gray, Archbishop of York, p. 100, Surtees Society.
[60] Ibid., p. 108.

Order of Sempringham. He heard that they "harassed the religious with manifold vexations," and warned them "that they who disturb the religious greatly offend the eyes of the Divine Majesty."[61] In 1259 Alexander IV. sent an indulgence "to the Master and brethren of the Order of Sempringham: that they shall cause their churches and chapels, in which vicars have not been appointed, to be served as heretofore by their own chaplains, and the vicarages shall not be taxed nor perpetual vicars appointed against the will of the said Master and brethren, notwithstanding any indulgence granted to the Archbishop of York, or any other in regard to such taxation and appointment."[62]

On the plea of poverty, the religious steadily went on appropriating churches. In 1267,[63] Richard, Bishop of Lincoln, allowed the appropriation of Old Lafford and Ruskington to the nuns and canons of Haverholme Priory —"to those whom the merits of a more excellent life, and the works of piety in which they studiously exercise themselves, make worthy of a more ample favour. The resources of the beloved children in Christ, the Prior and Convent of both sexes of the monastery of Haverholme, do not suffice for their support, and for the guests and poor who turn to them. Being filled with compassion for their poverty and pious necessity, and wishing to show special favour, the more willingly that they are of our patronage, we grant the church of Old Lafford and the moiety of the church of Ruskington, in which the patronage holds, for the relief of their indigence, and that they may be better able to make provision for the reception of guests, and help the needs of the poor, by pontifical authority, for their proper and pious uses for ever: so that the cure of souls in the said churches be in no way neglected, and the churches be not deprived of their due

[61] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 13^{v}, 3 Innocent IV.
[62] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 366, 5 Alexander IV.
[63] 1258–1279.

services, but be served for ever by ministers suitable to them, saving always, in all things, episcopal and archidiaconal customs, and the dignity of the church of Lincoln." [64]

In spite of some evasion, the Statute of Mortmain, 1279, checked the acquisition of lands by the religious. The Crown, however, willingly granted licenses to appropriate churches in mortmain, as it thereby lost none of its dues; the fines demanded went into the treasury. In 1312 the Prior and Convent of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln paid sixty marks for the right to appropriate the church of Stapleford by Norton Disney.[65] In the reign of Richard II. they appropriated the churches of Hackthorp, Mere, Hermeston, and S. Mary Magdalen at Newark.[66] In 1313 the Prior and Convent of Shouldham paid forty marks because they had appropriated the church of Stanford without the late king's license.[67] The religious foiled the bishops' opposition by means of papal bulls which enabled them to appropriate without the bishops' consent.[68]

The religious evaded the law, in the usual medieval fashion, when the breaking of it entailed no penalty, and often kept the parish churches vacant on the death of the vicars. The bishops, who grieved that the cure of souls should be neglected, presented to the livings without regard for the rights of monastic patrons.

In 1170 Alexander III. wrote "to the Master and Canons of the Order of Sempringham: 'It shall be lawful for you to place four or at least three of your canons in your vacant parish churches. One of them shall be presented to the bishop of the diocese that he may receive the cure of souls from him, that he may

[64] "Liber Antiquus Hugonis Wells," p. 105.

[65] Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ed. II., p. 1, m. 15.

[66] Ibid., 13 Ric. II., p. 2, m. 2; 15 Ric. II., p. 1, m. 13; 16 Ric. II., p. 2, m. 2; 22 Ric. II., p. 3, m. 3.

[67] Cal. Rot. Pat., 7 Ed. II., m. 3.

[68] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 258, 6 Innocent IV.; p. 331, 2 Alexander IV.

answer to him about spiritual matters, and to you about temporal matters and the observance of the Order.'"[69] On the petition of the Master and brothers of Sempringham, Honorius III. confirmed the privilege, and sent a mandate to the Abbots of Fountains, Rievaulx, and Byland to maintain it.[70] Gregory IX. wrote: "So long as you are prepared to present suitable men to the bishops within a lawful time, for those vacant churches of yours, in which you have the sole right of patronage, you cannot be canonically compelled by the bishops to receive others."[71] The Constitutions of Ottoboni, 1268, fixed six months as a "lawful time."[72]

In 1402, when the hostility of the Commons showed most plainly that the Church was out of touch with the nation, a statute was passed providing "that henceforth in every church appropried a secular person be ordained vicar, and that no religious be in any wise made vicar in any church so appropried."[73] No punishment was attached to a breach of this law, therefore it effected nothing. In the tenth year of Henry VI. the Lords and Commons proposed that "in every church appropried a secular person be ordained perpetual vicar, and that if any religious henceforth suffer a vicarage to be six months without a resident vicar, the said church shall be disappropried and disamortized for ever." The pious protector of the religious would not consent, and therefore the evil continued.

Wherever the Gilbertines held lands, and cultivated them by their own labour and at their own expense, the Popes exempted them from the payment of tithes, also from tithes of mills, and from tithes of the young of animals, "commonly called the tithe of S. John of Beverley

[69] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 8ᵛ.
[70] Ibid., f. 9ᵛ, 5 Honorius III.
[71] Ibid., f. 12, 9 Gregory IX.
[72] Dr. Cutts, "Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages in England," p. 108.
[73] *Et seq.*, Ibid.

in Yorkshire, Mariencorn in Lincolnshire."[74] This indulgence pressed hard on the parish priests. In the reign of Edward I., Alan, rector of the church of St. Peter of Conisholme, inspected the privileges of the Order of Sempringham, and released and quitclaimed the Prior and Convent of Alvingham, from the presentation of tithes of hay in the territory of Conisholme, viz., from sixty acres in the meadows, which were called Yerlesdale, and from a hundred and twenty acres in Somercotes. He swore for himself and his successors that they would never ask anything in the name of tithes from the aforesaid meadows.[75]

From the Papacy the Gilbertines had the privilege of "free burial, that nothing, save the justice of those churches from which the bodies of the dead are taken, may hinder the devotion and last wish of those who desire to be buried there."[76] Founders and benefactors often stipulated that they—sometimes their families too—should be received into the confraternity of the house. Humphrey of Alvingham, a grandson of William de Friston, a possible founder of Alvingham Priory, granted land in Alvingham with his body and that of his wife Avice: "The same convent has received my wife Avice and me into its spiritual fraternity, and when our last day has closed, it will receive us into its burial ground in charity, and perform for us the full service as for a brother or for a sister of the house."[77] Henry le Wildebof granted a bovate of land in Skelton to the nuns of Haverholme: the convent had received him, his wife Albreda, his sons Thomas, Godfrey, William, and Richard, and his daughter Sibilla into its fraternity.[78] Roese, co-founder of Chicksand with Pagan de Beau-

[74] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 8^{v}, 2 Celestine III. *Cf.* also Ibid., f. 7, 19 Alexander III.; f. 9^{v}, Honorius III.; f. 11, 1 Gregory IX.; Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 961.

[75] MS. Laud, 642, f. 91^{v}.

[76] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 8, 19 Alexander III.; Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 961.

[77] MS. Laud, 642, f. 20^{v}.

[78] MS. Lansdowne, 207^{a}, f. 120, British Museum.

champ, was buried in the Priory; Simon de Kyme and his wife were buried at Bullington, Geoffrey FitzPiers at Shouldham.

The belief in the efficacy of burial by the religious grew stronger in the later Middle Ages, when men built chantries, and endowed them, that priests might sing masses for their souls. In 1388 John de Cockerington, knight, left his body to be buried in the church of S. Mary, Cockerington, in which he had built his chantry.[79] In 1396 John de Beaumont, lord of Folkingham, left "to Sempringham Priory the little Cross made of our Lord's Cross, and my body to be buried in Sempringham Church near the body of my most honoured lord, my father, whom God asoile."[80] In 1413 Henry de Beaumont, lord of Folkingham, was buried in the Priory Church.[81]

A bull, granted by Innocent III., forbade any one to build "religious houses, chapels, altars and cemeteries, within the parishes" of their churches, without their assent and that of the bishop of the diocese.[82] It was a safeguard for the rights of the mother church, not a check on the provision for the spiritual needs of the people.

A privilege of which the Gilbertines did not avail themselves was the right of sending four canons to serve the church of S. Sixtus at Rome.[83] When Honorius III. remonstrated with them for their neglect, because the Church had long been deprived of persons to serve it, and threatened to place other religious there, they showed that

[79] "Early Lincoln Wills," ed. A. W. Gibbons, p. 40.

[80] Ibid., p. 30. [81] Ibid., p. 111.

[82] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 961. A great feature of the work of the Church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the endowment of chapels and the raising of their status to that of parish churches; the dignity of the mother churches was preserved by the payment of a small yearly sum to them "in nomine subjectionis." *Cf.* Dr. Cutts, "Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages in England," chap. viii. pp. 110–126.

[83] The grant of this privilege is only known by the remonstrance of Honorius III. Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 57, 3 Honorius III.

they were unable to supply it sufficiently, and obtained a release from a considerable burden and expense.[84]

The Order of Sempringham suffered, with the rest of the Church in England, from papal provisions and exactions. Henry III. made no attempt to resist the encroachments of Gregory IX. and Innocent IV.

England was called the Pope's farm, and in spite of the barons' opposition, the bishops had to find benefices for as many Italians as the Popes chose to thrust upon them. "Italian succeeds Italian," wrote Matthew Paris. "In the benefices of Italians are neither the rights of prelates, nor the support of the poor, nor hospitality, nor the preaching of the Word of God, nor the ornament of the churches, nor the cure of souls, nor divine services in the churches as it is fitting and as is the custom of the country, but in the fabrics the walls fall with the roofs and are utterly rent asunder."[85]

In obedience to a mandate of Otto, the papal legate, Walter Gray, Archbishop of York, gave "Gilbert, clerk of Birdsall, the moiety of the church of Trowell, then vacant, and in the presentation of the Prior and Convent of Sempringham."[86] In 1237, by the authority "of the Lateran Council," he conferred on "Roger de Mosewood the vicarage of Brompton, so that at other times no prejudice shall arise against the Prior and Convent of Malton, who hold the patronage of the church."[87]

Other impositions must have induced the Master and brothers of Sempringham to complain to Innocent IV., for in 1245 he wrote: "By the authority of our present letters we grant you indulgence, that you be not able to be forced to make provision for any one, by pensions or by ecclesiastical benefices, by the authority of the apostolic see or of legates, without a mandate of the apostolic see

[84] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 69, 4 Honorius III.

[85] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. iv. p. 528, Rolls Series

[86] "Register of Walter Gray, Archbishop of York," p. 91, Surtees Society.

[87] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 41.

making full mention of this indulgence." [88] The Priors of Bridlington, Kirkham, and Wartre were appointed "conservators" of the privilege.[89] Nevertheless, Innocent had reserved for himself the power to do as he chose. In 1253 he wrote a special letter to the Master and brothers of Sempringham, which recapitulated the bull sent in that year, to the whole Church in England: he recognised the rights of patrons, and promised to abstain from making provisions.[90]

The Popes continued to exercise the right, with no real check, until the Parliament passed the Statute of Provisors in 1351, and enforced the observance of it by the Statute of Præmunire in 1393. "Rome-seeking" chaplains prompted their patrons to petition the Popes on their behalf; in 1343 William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton, obtained "the living of Brompton, value eighty marks, in the gift of the Prior of Malton, of the Order of S. Gilbert, for Henry Broun, his domestic chaplain."[91] In 1359 Innocent VI. made provision "to William de Thoraldby, Augustinian canon of Kirkham, of the vicarage of Newark, void by the death of Robert de Silkeston, Gilbertine canon of S. Catherine's without Lincoln, at Avignon."[92]

The clergy suffered most severely from papal extortion in the reign of Henry III. John's submission in 1215, and Henry's III.'s weak piety enabled the Popes to get money from the clergy. In 1229 Gregory IX. demanded a tenth of all moveables from both clergy and laity.[93] In 1239 Otto, the papal legate, claimed a fifth of all ecclesiastical revenues. "In 1246 Innocent IV. asked for a third of the revenues of benefices from resident incumbents. In 1253 he granted to Henry a third of all ecclesiastical tithes for three years, on pretext of a crusade. In

[88] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 13, 2 Innocent IV.
[89] Ibid. [90] Ibid., f. 24, 11 Innocent IV.
[91] Calendar of Petitions to the Pope, vol i. p. 68.
[92] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. iii. p. 604.
[93] *Et seq.*, Wakeman, "History of the Church of England," p. 133.

1257 Alexander IV. continued this grant for two years more. In the next year he excommunicated the clergy who had not paid it."[94] "The exactions of tenths of ecclesiastical revenue," wrote the Bishop of Oxford, "were not, indeed, collected without the consent of the payers, given in provincial synod; but the consent was really compulsory; the King was in alliance with the Pope, and even Grosseteste admitted that the Pope's needs were great and must be satisfied."[95] In the reign of Henry III. the Papacy was engaged in a struggle for its very existence with the Empire. Two earlier conflicts had been decided in its favour. Henry IV. had stood in a woollen frock barefoot in the snow for three days before the Castle of Canossa, waiting till Gregory VII. should remove from him the ban of excommunication. At Venice, Frederick Barbarossa had kissed the feet of Alexander III. outside S. Mark's. Sicily, the heritage of the Norman kings, who had saved the Popes, fell to Frederick II. Honorius III., Gregory IX., and Innocent IV. strained every nerve to crush him and the House of Hohenstaufen for ever. The crown of the Sicilies for his son Edmund was an irresistible bait to Henry III. English money poured into the coffers of the Papacy.

The opposition of the Church was of no avail, as Matthew Paris told in one instance of extortion. "In those days (1240) there came into England a new exaction of money, unheard of in all centuries and execrable. For the Pope, our holy father, sent a certain collector, Peter Rubeus, into England, who had been instructed how by a trap to draw infinite money from the wretched English. For he entered the chapters of the religious, forcing them and seducing them to promise money, and to pay what they promised, by the example of other prelates: he lied, and affirmed that they had gladly paid it, for he said 'that bishop and that one, that abbot and that one,

Wakeman, "History of the Church of England," p. 133.
Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. iii. p. 347.

have already willingly satisfied me. Why do ye slothful brothers so delay that ye lose thanks for your gifts?' For that aforesaid impostor made them swear that they would show no man this means of extorting money for half a year; drawing this from the primitive ownership of individuals, although only a papal scheme about honourable matters ought to be concealed. He did this in the way of robbers of houses, who extort a pledge from those whom they have spoiled that they will reveal to no man the names of the spoilers. But even if men were silent, the stones of the churches would cry out against the robbers. Nor could this ill-doing be hidden in darkness. How, indeed, could the prelates exact money from their men and those subject to them unless the cause of the exaction was known? The Abbots came weeping with bowed head to the King, patron of their churches, saying, 'Lord King, we are beaten black and blue, yet we may not complain; our throats are cut, yet we cannot cry out. An impossible thing is enjoined upon us by the Lord Pope, an exaction detestable to the whole world. We hold our baronies from you, nor can we make them poor without prejudice to you; nor can we answer to you for the burdens upon them, and satisfy the Pope, who racks us without ceasing. For thus and thus, fresh and ever new and unexpected compulsion is planned and inflicted upon us by the Romans. They suffer us not to breathe even for a moment. To the refuge of your counsel and to the bosom of your protection we rush, asking advice and aid about these spoilings.' And they who spake thus were the Lord Abbot of S. Edmund's and the Lord Abbot of Battle. When the King heard these words, looking on them with fierce face and terrifying them with boisterous shout, he cried out to the Legate, who was then present by chance: "Behold, my Lord Legate, these wretched seducers rail, they reveal the secrets of the Pope and consent not to your will. Do with them what you please. Lo, I grant to you one of my best castles, that you may guard them

in prison.' When the Abbots heard these words, they were struck with confusion greater than man can tell. They withdrew, and prepared to make satisfaction to the Legate according to his will. But some, yet only a few, still unwavering, would not put their necks under servitude so hateful: they stood firm, and scarcely troubled to make the excuses of delay."[96]

The poverty of Sempringham was probably due to the papal extortions; in 1247 "two hundred women living at Sempringham often needed the necessaries of life, and suffered in health for lack of them."[97] In 1252, when the receipts of Malton were £619 9s. 10d., the amount paid "for the subsidy of the Pope and the tallage of the Order was" was £61 8s. 8d.; in the following year, when the receipts were £691 16s. 5d., it was £140 13s. 4d.[98]

In 1256 Alexander IV. claimed the firstfruits of bishoprics and benefices, for five years, as a voluntary offering from the new incumbents.[99] The demand was again made by Clement V. in 1306, for two years. In spite of opposition in Parliament and Council, and at the Council of Constance, the clergy appear to have regularly handed over the firstfruits to the Papacy.

Heavy exactions continued in the reigns of Edward I. and Edward II.,[100] who did not scruple to share the profits with the Popes, as they dared not refuse their demands. After the settlement of the Papacy at Avignon extortion from England was much less successful. In 1319 the Prior of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln was forbidden to collect the firstfruits of priories in that bishopric, "grievous complaint having been made by the earls, barons, and magnates of the realm, in parliament at York."[101] The

[96] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. iv. p. 35, Rolls Series.

[97] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 232, 4 Innocent IV.; p. 258, 6 Innocent IV.

[98] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 276, 276^{v}.

[99] *Et seq.*, Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. iii. p. 348.

[100] Ibid., n. (1) for instances.

[101] Cal. Rot. Cl., 12 Ed. II., m. 24 d.

Order of Sempringham was paying a pound of gold every two years to the papal treasurer in 1345; at the request of King Edward and Queen Isabella, his mother, the pound was reduced to a mark.[102]

Though the payment of firstfruits and tenths was a frequent subject of complaint in Parliament,[103] and it was discussed at the Conference at Bruges in 1374–5,[104] and at the Council of Pisa in 1409,[105] there was no real redress. In 1531 Convocation informed Henry VIII. that £160,000 had been paid as annates and firstfruits to the Pope between 1486 and 1531.[106]

[102] Calendar of Petitions to the Pope, vol. i. p. 86.
[103] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. ii. p. 412.
[104] Ibid., p. 447.
[105] Creighton, "History of the Papacy," vol. i. p. 253, ed. 1897.
[106] 23 Henry VIII., c. 20.

VI

THE HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF SEMPRINGHAM

VERY scanty materials exist for the history of the Order of Sempringham. Nothing remains of the works of the learned brothers who studied at Cambridge and Stamford, and had the Master's leave to write what they chose in the cloister, but the short Annals of Sempringham, the "Story of England" by Robert Mannynge and his book on "Handlyng Synne."

Throughout the thirteenth century the possessions of the Order steadily increased. Only the study of a cartulary can give a real impression of the way in which the religious added strip to strip of land, got rents as small as twopence remitted, and received grants of villeins, their chattels and their families. In 1221 the yearly revenue of Alvingham was £119 9s. 8d.;[1] its cartulary registers over five hundred charters.[2] The roll of benefactors of religious houses included not only barons and knights, but also rich citizens and prosperous craftsmen in the villages. Godwin the Rich, Richard son of Jacob, Thomas son of Ailfy the Tanner, citizens of Lincoln, were benefactors of Sempringham;[3] Geoffrey the Mercer, of Alvingham,[4] Abraham

[1] MS. Laud, 642, f. 37v.
[2] Ibid.
[3] The *Genealogist*, vol. xv. p. 160.
[4] MS. Laud, 643, f. 141.

the Smith of Torrington and his family, gave lands to Bullington,[5] John the Smith to Alvingham.[6]

The ceremony attending grants to houses of religion was in keeping with a gift to God. The charter was offered at the altar with a solemn oath. When Hamelin the Dean gave to God, the Church of S. Mary at Alvingham, and the nuns there, three parts of the Church of S. Adelwold at Alvingham, Robert de Chesney, Bishop of Lincoln, invested the nuns with the church and its appurtenances in the general chapter of Sempringham.[7] Robert de Pormor offered arable lands in Alvingham and Cockerington, in the general chapter of Sempringham, with his hand on the altar, and swore in the hand of Peter de Goufle that his gift should abide for ever, in the presence of Matthew, chaplain, the Earl of Leicester, Godfrey, chaplain, Countess Roese, and others.[8] On the Feast of the Circumcision, 1321, William, son of Thomas de Somercotes, knight, gave three acres, a toft, and a mill in Somercotes at the prebendal church of Louth, in the presence of Peter de Raithby, Thomas de Willoughby, Gilbert de Cockerington, knights, and others.[9]

The first members of the Order, rejoicing in honourable poverty, had striven to limit the dangerous means by which their successors aimed at increasing their wealth. "They who in very truth long to serve God shall beware of taking lands or pastures for a yearly payment from secular men."[10] No lands might be bought or hired or taken in pledge without the Master's leave.[11] Yet in thirteen years, from 1244 to 1256, the Prior and Convent of Malton spent £478 14s. 5d. in purchasing lands, £197 17s. 0d. in hiring meadows.[12]

In their anxiety to add to the possessions of their houses

[5] Add. 6118, British Museum, f. 399v.
[6] MS. Laud, 642, f. 20v.
[7] Ibid., f. 10. [8] Ibid., f. 14. [9] Ibid., f. 91v.
[10] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xcv. [11] Ibid.
[12] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. ff. 275v, 276, 276v.

the Priors of Alvingham and Malton forgot a precept of S. Gilbert: "Nor indeed is it lawful to become a pledge for any secular, for it befits us, who study to please God, not the world, to be strangers to the causes and business of those who rejoice in the service of the world, not of God. We forbid the Priors and all others in authority in our Order to entangle themselves by exchange or pledge in the debts of any man." [13]

Many of the smaller barons borrowed largely from the Jews; at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the monasteries of the new Order were growing prosperous, the barons persuaded them to take over their debts in return for grants of land.[14] Beatrice de Melsa, wife of Peter de Melsa, with the consent of Peter and his son and heir John, granted in pure and perpetual alms to God, the Church of S. Mary at Alvingham, and the nuns and brothers there, that half of her domain nearer to the territories of Alvingham and Cockerington, excepting the toft and orchard—a gift of thirty acres of arable land and ten acres of meadow—together with her daughter. The Prior of Alvingham and the Church of S. Mary acquitted Peter and herself of their debt of eighty-seven marks of silver to the Jews.[15] Several of the benefactors of Malton in the reign of Henry III. owed debts to the Jews of York, which the Prior and Convent paid for them on taking over the lands which they had pledged. The Prior and Convent of Malton had to pay Josce, nephew of Aaron of York, thirty-six and a half marks of silver for the debts of William de Richburgh, who granted them seven bovates of land in Welham in 1244, besides three marks of silver for the dower of his mother, Albreda.[16] William de Redburn had several creditors whom they satisfied for his debts contracted before 1243,[17] Jacob, son of Leo of

[13] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxix.
[14] Jacobs, "The Jews of Angevin England," p. 178.
[15] MS. Laud, 642, f. 10; Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 957.
[16] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 64^{v}.
[17] Ibid., f. 114. *Cf.* also MS. Laud, 642, f. 83^{v}.

Lincoln, Josce, nephew of Aaron of York, and Leo, Bishop of the Jews of York.[18] Ralph de Bolebec,[19] the King's forester of Pickering, in spite of his valuable gift of sixty quarterns of salt, of corn lands and meadows,[20] was a doubtful benefactor; he owed debts to Leo of Lincoln, Josce of York, and Samuel, son of Leo, Bishop of York.[21] Besides paying them, the Prior and Convent granted him food for himself, two horses, and two men, whenever he came to Malton.[22] His son, Ralph, persecuted the canons of Malton. On Sunday, All Souls' Day, 1236, he came into the presence of Prior William, seeking pardon; in the parlour he took an oath that he would attempt nothing contrary to the charters of his father.[23] At the bridge of Howe over the Derwent, on S. Margaret's Day, 1239, he swore upon the holy Gospels that he would not unjustly seize the cattle of the canons.[24]

Several other donors whose debts to the Jews devolved on Malton are mentioned in the Cartulary. The unexplained debts of Malton, ranging from £30 13s. 3d. in 1250 to £251 13s. 4d. in 1255,[25] were perhaps contracted in this way; perhaps they were the result of direct borrowing from the Jews.

The Jews, who were excluded from most occupations by the necessity of taking a Christian oath, did all the business of money-lending in the early Middle Ages. Christians were forbidden to take usury by the Church, under Aristotle's dictum that interest was money born of money and petty usury deserved abhorrence,[26] as well as by the

[18] "The Jewish Law as fixed by the Talmud was administered among the Jews by a tribunal known as the Beth Din ('House of Judgment'), composed of three Dayanim or Judges; these seem to have been called bishops in England" (*cf.* Jacobs, "The Jews of Angevin England," p. 43).

[19] North Riding Records, New Series, vol. i. p. xx. *Cf.* Surtees Society, Cartulary of Whitby, vol. 2, p. 714.

[20] MS. Cotton, Claudius D. xi. f. 119.

[21] Ibid., ff. 117, 118.

[22] Ibid., f. 118.

[23] Ibid., f. 117.

[24] Ibid., f. 117.

[25] Ibid., f. 276^{v}.

Aristotle, "The Politics," book i. chap. x.

Gospel precept, "Lend, hoping for nothing again."[27] The Jews in England were under the King's special protection: as he squeezed them at will and claimed the chattels of all usurers who died in sin, it was to his interest that they should amass great wealth. The usual rate of interest was sixty per cent. Many monasteries were heavily in debt to the Jews. Nine Cistercian houses in the North were built with the money of Aaron of Lincoln.[28] He boasted, to the great wrath of the monks, that he had built the shrine of S. Alban.[29] During the rule of Hugh, predecessor of Samson, Abbot of Bury S. Edmund's, the house was pledged for thousands by its different officers.[30] Jocelin of Brakelond wrote: "The Jews to whom William the Sacrist was said to be father and protector, whose protection they indeed enjoyed, had free ingress and egress, and went all over the monastery, wandering about the altars and around the shrine while High Mass was being celebrated. Moreover, their moneys were kept safe in our treasury, under the care of the sacrist, and what was still more absurd, their wives with their little ones were lodged in our pitancery in time of war." [31]

The hostility of the Church, the impoverishment of the lesser barons, the opposition of the towns to the Jewries in their midst, and the general hatred of the Jews, led to their expulsion from England in 1290.[32] The gain of the religious houses was great; probably the King pardoned many debts, and they started afresh on a sound financia basis.[33]

Like the Cistercians, the Gilbertines were a great wool-growing community. Probably in this they imitated the Order from which they borrowed so much. Circumstances

[27] S. Luke vi. 35. [28] *Jewish Quarterly*, July, 1898.

[29] Walsingham, "Gesta S. Albani," vol. i. p. 193, ed. Riley, Rolls Series.

[30] Jocelin of Brakelond, Chronicles, p. 2., Camden Society.

[31] Ibid., p. 8.

[32] Abrahams, "The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290."

[33] Ibid.

also influenced them. Many of their charters specified wide grants of pastures; Bullington Priory received pasturage for five hundred sheep, ten cows, and as many calves, from Alexander de Crevecœur.[34] The marshy land in which so many of the houses were situated produced much grass, but little corn. As the chief source of income was the proceeds of the wool sold to foreign merchants, the Gilbertines must have suffered severely in 1193, when the whole of the wool of the Order for that year was seized for the ransom of Richard.[35]

The complaints made before the Special Justices of Edward in 1284 [36] showed that the immense profits of the wool trade tempted the Gilbertines to break the Rule which forbade them to sell other men's goods.[37] They bought up wool and merchandise throughout Lincolnshire, and sold them at the markets and fairs to Flemish merchants. Thus the bailiffs were deprived of due tolls. Nineteen of the Gilbertine houses had contracts to sell their wool to Flemish and Florentine merchants in the fourteenth century.[38]

The Gilbertines suffered with the rest of the English merchants from the maltôtes or unlawful customs levied on the export of wool by the Crown.[39] They were finally relieved from this extortion by the Parliament of 1371.

In the middle of the thirteenth century the house of Malton held lands in forty-nine parishes, chiefly in Yorkshire.[40] The number of rent-paying tenants was at least two hundred and fifty, but as their money payments were very small, the annual income from this source averaged only £60.[41] While the payment for many tofts was two

[34] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 953.
[35] Roger de Hoveden, vol. iii. p. 210.
[36] Rotuli Hundredorum, vol. i. p. 317 a.
[37] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxv.
[38] Cunningham, "History of English Industry and Commerce," vol. i., Appendix D., pp. 624–633.
[39] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. ii. p. 200.
[40] MS. Cotton, Claudius, f. 267^{v}–271. [41] Ibid., ff. 275^{v}, 276.

S. MARY'S, OLD MALTON, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

[*Facing p.* 126

shillings, the rent for mills was high in comparison: the mill at Swinton was let for sixteen shillings,[42] that at Rillington for fifteen.[43] Among the rents paid in kind were forty carts of wood, forty quarters of salt, six pounds of cumen, one of pepper, two of incense, one of wax.[44]

The Priory had eleven granges. The expenses of these amounted to £84 18s. 6d. in 1246;[45] the wages of the hired servants to £11 7s. 6d.[46] As the hired servants probably received clothing as well as food, and all the tools and materials for their labour were provided, their wages were low: a cook received three shillings a year, a cheesemaker three, a watchman three, a baker four, a fisherman five, a maltster five, a farrier six and eightpence, a smith seven, a carpenter ten.[47] Tailors, cobblers, carters, and farmery servants were also employed. The house derived two-thirds of its revenue from wool, making about four hundred pounds in a good year.[48] Tillage was sacrificed to the more profitable sheep-farming: in 1253 the house spent £47 6s. 9d. on buying corn, in the following year £138 13s. 4d.[49] The receipts just exceeded the expenditure; in 1253 these were £691 16s. 5d. and £687 0s. 10d. respectively; in 1254, £507 3s. 11d. and £506 1s. 3d.[50] However, there were debts, to which reference has already been made.

The Statute of Mortmain, 1279, was no real check on the acquisition of lands by the religious. As the three Edwards were always in need of money for their wars, licenses to receive lands in mortmain were easily obtained on payment of a fine. The Statute insured the King's knowledge of the grants, which were duly entered on the Patent Rolls. From this evidence it is possible to follow the fortunes of the monasteries.

[42] MS. Cotton, Claudius, f. 268.
[43] Ibid., f. 269v.
[44] Ibid., 267v–271.
[45] Ibid., f. 275v.
[46] Ibid., f. 275v.
[47] Ibid., f. 271v.
[48] Ibid., f. 275v.
[49] Ibid., f. 276v.
[50] Ibid.

S. Catherine's outside Lincoln was one of the chief Gilbertine houses. In 1285 the Prior and Convent received a license to build a windmill in a green plot without the gate of their priory on the east, because this diminished the value of the pasture of the city by only twelve pence yearly.[51] In 1293 Master Henry de Newark, dean of S. Peter's at York, was able to grant two acres of land in Northorp, with the advowson of the church there, to the Prior and Convent of S. Catherine's. In return they were bound to find two chaplains to celebrate divine service in the chapel of S. Catherine and S. Martha, which he had recently built in the churchyard of S. Mary Magdalen, Newark, for his soul and the souls of his ancestors.[52] In 1294 the Prior and Convent enclosed a plot of their land three and a half perches long by one perch broad, adjoining the priory, for the enlargement of it.[53] In 1306 they were allowed to lead the water from a well in the field of Canwick to their house by an underground aqueduct.[54] In 1312 they paid sixty marks to appropriate in mortmain the church of Stapleford by Norton Disney.[55]

To preserve unity among the houses of the Order, the Rule strictly forbade them to dispute about property; if one house received lands lying near another house, it was bound to deliver them to that house for due compensation. If any house were oppressed by the heavy burden of poverty, the charity and mercy of the other houses were to assist it.[56]

"For the keeping of peace and charity," a solemn agreement "in the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," was drawn up between the chapters of Citeaux and Sempringham in

[51] Cal. Rot. Pat., 13 Ed. I., m. 23.
[52] Ibid., 21 Ed. I., m. 1.
[53] Ibid., 22 Ed. I., m. 28.
[54] Ibid. 35 Ed. I., m. 46.
[55] Ibid. 6 Ed. II., m. 15.
[56] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xciv. In 1257 during a famine fifty-two nuns and ten lay-brothers of Chicksand were sent to other houses of the Order. "Annales Monastici," vol. iii. p. 205, Rolls Series.

1164.[57] It was signed by seven Cistercian Abbots, including Ailred of Rievaulx, by Gilbert of Sempringham and seven of his Priors.

The most obvious source of dispute was the acquisition of lands. Cistercian and Gilbertine houses arose within a short distance of one another; Louth Park was close to Alvingham, Kyme to Bullington. As the possessions of each house increased and became scattered, granges were built at which the lay-brothers lived to look after the property. The agreement provided that no one of either chapter might build a grange or sheepfold within two leagues of a grange or sheepfold of the other Order. If land not greater in extent than one ploughland were given without any price or service to the Gilbertines within the forbidden bounds, they might accept it on condition that none of the brothers dwelt there, and that they let it out to a secular. The Cistercians might not hold land in this way. The Gilbertines could receive churches without grange or sheepfold within the bounds; they might build dwellings for clerks, and a grange to store tithes or the harvest from the church lands, and they might put a "just" number of animals upon the pastures. Either Order might build granges within the bounds, if the lands were separated by water which could not be crossed by ford or bridge.

The agreement drawn up in 1174 between the Abbot and Convent of Louth Park and the Prior and Convent of Alvingham [58] provided that neither house should hire, nor acquire for price, cultivated or uncultivated lands, meadow, marsh or pasture without the consent and advice of the other. If the brothers of Louth Park broke the contract, the brothers of Alvingham could take the third part of the land on payment of a third of the price. On the other hand, the brothers of Louth Park could take two-thirds of the land of the brothers of Alvingham for two-thirds of

[57] MS. Stowe, 937, British Museum; Cartulary of Pipewell, f. 145^{v}.
[58] MS. Laud, 642, f. 130^{v}.

the price. The pact was to be kept in twenty parishes in Lincolnshire.

Hired servants were greatly needed at haymaking and at wheat harvest. No one might draw away or receive hired servants from a house of the other Order until they had fulfilled their time of service.[59] If any one transgressed in this way, he received the discipline of the Rule in his own chapter, and was afterwards sent to the chapter of the other house to undergo the same punishment. While the buyers of one house were bargaining about anything "moveable or immoveable," the buyers of a house of the other Order were forbidden to thrust themselves in.

The harbouring of fugitives was another source of strife. No Cistercian house might receive a canon, novice, or lay-brother of the Sempringham Order, no Sempringham house a Cistercian monk, novice, or lay-brother. Each Order was forbidden to admit men who had been educated by the other Order without their consent.

On account of the distance from Citeaux at which the Cistercian chapter met, it was arranged that three abbots should be appointed, with full power to settle disputes, with three Gilbertine priors "of wise counsel." The hearing of the quarrel might not be carried elsewhere, until they had met at least twice, and failed to arbitrate. The agreement between Louth Park and Alvingham fixed a tribunal. If the brothers of Louth Park broke the pact, the Abbots of Fountains, Kirkstead and S. Laurence were to make it of force; failing them, the Cistercian chapter. The Abbots of Kirkstead and S. Laurence, the Priors of Haverholme and Sixhills, were to compel the brothers of Alvingham to make amends within forty days; if they were unable, the obligation lay on the chapter of Sempringham; in the last resort, on the Bishop and chapter of Lincoln.

Material wealth involved a loss of spiritual efficiency.

[59] *Et seq.*, MS. Stowe, 937, f. 145^{v}.

The religious exchanged the service of mammon for the service of God. The labour of managing the landed estates of a monastery was so great that the officials were often absorbed in secular affairs. The waste of time was most conspicuous. The method of cultivation was the open field system. Rents as small as sixpence were collected in three or four instalments ; the saints' days on which they fell due varied with the locality and the strip of land. S. Botolf's Day was a usual term in Lincolnshire, Christmas Day was common everywhere. The Prior and Convent of Alvingham paid to Robert and William, sons of Ralph, son of Dued, thirteen pence and a third of a penny yearly at four times, Christmas, Easter, S. Botolf's Day, and the Feast of S. Michael.[60]

The career of an officer of a rich house attracted men with business capacities but with little enthusiasm for the old ascetic ideal. Increased wealth brought increased luxury. The austerity of the Rule was relaxed.

In comparison with the Benedictines, the Order of Sempringham took but little part in educating the youth of England. The canons were forbidden by the Rule to teach any boys in their houses except novices, because the work might interfere with their care for the nuns.[61] It is possible that boys were taught in the houses for canons only or in a school outside the monastery. There was a master of the schools at Malton in 1245 ;[62] a grammar school was founded at Malton after the Dissolution,[63] perhaps, as in many other instances, to take the place of a monastic school. Possibly the Gilbertine nuns were educating girls in 1223, when Honorius III. issued an inhibition to the master and chapter of the Order of Sempringham to admit any young girl or woman, who did

[60] MS. Laud, 642, f. 13^{v}.
[61] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xliii.
[62] MS. Laud, 642, f. 3.
[63] A. F. Leach, "English Schools at the Reformation," part 2, p. 287.

not intend to become a nun, to be nurtured or taught in the convents of their Order.[64]

In spite of the warning of S. Paul to the Corinthians, "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another,"[65] the religious were frequently engaged in lawsuits. Zeal for the welfare of the house, and a steadfast purpose not to lose one jot or tittle of its rights, was a natural characteristic of the religious; they believed that they held in trust for God, the Church, and those who came after them. The Rule of Sempringham forbade any Prior to enter on a lawsuit without the consent of the Master; if he deemed it necessary for the welfare of the Order, he could call on each house to help in proportion to its resources.[66] The Gilbertines were also forbidden to be present "at the judgment of secular men, to help or to burden any one, since by prayer we ought to help any one before a judge against his adversary; but if summoned to bear witness to the truth, where religion allows it, we do not forbid it. Moreover we except the command of the Lord Pope, his legate, and the bishop of the diocese."[67]

A suit was often the only remedy against oppression: sometimes the Gilbertines appealed to the Pope, who appointed some one to hear the cause; sometimes they pleaded in the King's court. In the life of S. Gilbert, a certain Master Stephen disputed the right of the Prior and Convent of Alvingham to the church of Kedington.[68] The Pope intrusted the cause to Hugh, Abbot of Bury S. Edmund's. Jocelin of Brakelond wrote of him when "he was old and his eyes were dim; he was a pious and kind man, a good and religious monk, yet not wise or foreseeing in worldly affairs; one who trusted too much to his own men and put faith in them, rather taking

[64] Cal. Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 90, 7 Honorius III.
[65] 1 Corinthians vi. 7.
[66] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xxxii.
[67] Ibid., p. lxix.
[68] MS. Laud, 642, f. 122.

counsel of another than abiding by his own judgment."[69] The outcome of the hearing was that Master Stephen made a formal renunciation in the chapter of Lincoln. The chief lawsuit in the history of Alvingham was about the advowson of the church of Garthorp. Brian of Yarborough, son of Hamelin the Dean, an early benefactor, granted the church of S. Clement in Garthorp, with all its appurtenances, with the authority of the Bishop of Lincoln.[70] Two of Brian's sons, John and Gilbert, afterwards disputed the gift of the advowson,[71] and impleaded the Prior and Convent in the King's court. On the octave of S. Michael, 1240, the itinerant justices at Reading decided in favour of the Prior.[72] Toil, expense, and vexation of spirit invariably attended lawsuits, yet they are common enough in the history of each house.

The Master of Sempringham was sometimes appointed by the Pope to hear causes which he had been asked to judge. In 1236 Gregory IX. sent a mandate to the Master of Sempringham and the Dean of York to hear and bring to an end the cause between Bartholomew, rector of S. Keverne in Cornwall, and the Abbot and Convent of Beaulieu.[73] In the same year Gregory ordered the Master of Sempringham, the Prior of Holy Trinity, London, and the Archdeacon of Sudbury to summon Edmund Rich, Archbishop of Canterbury, personally or by proctor, to Rome, to answer to the Pope, if he persisted in attempting to subject to himself the Abbot and monks of S. Augustine's, Canterbury.[74]

Looking now from Sempringham over the flat expanse of corn lands stretching for miles towards the coast, it is difficult to realise that the country was in constant danger of being "drowned"[75] in the winter, until Vermuyden

[69] Jocelin of Brakelond, p. 1, Camden Society.
[70] MS. Laud, 642, f. 96. [71] Ibid., f. 96ᵛ. [72] Ibid., f. 98.
[73] Cal. Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 155, 10 Gregory IX. [74] Ibid.
[75] Dugdale, "History of Imbanking and Draining," p. 417 (ed. 1772); *cf.* also Camden, "Britannia," p. 459 (ed. 1695).

drained the fens in the sixteenth century. Danger from floods was recognised in the Rule of Sempringham. "Since often by chance many misfortunes, greater and less, and worthy of correction, happen in our houses, if it is necessary to do or to give anything for the repairing of houses, inclosures, walls, or ditches, by the advice of the brothers dwelling there or of faithful hired servants, it shall be done, and the deed and the cause shown very quickly to the Prior and Cellarer."[76] Contemporary writers have left vivid accounts of the great inundations. "In 1175, the ocean as though irritated by the sins of men," wrote William of Newburgh, "raged more than it was wont, broke through the barriers, which had been formerly prepared against the stormy inburst of the waves, in Hoiland, and rushed violently over the low flat country on January 7th. It destroyed almost all cattle and a multitude of men; the rest barely escaped by climbing up trees and on to the roofs of houses. The ocean returned unto itself after two days as though its fury were satisfied."[77] John of Oxnead, a monk of S. Benet Holme, in Norfolk, described some of the storms at the end of the thirteenth century. "On December 26, 1287, the sea began to be moved, by the vehemence of the wind and its own importunate and swelling violence, in thick darkness. It burst forth from its wonted bounds over the flat shores occupying townships, meadows, and other adjacent lands, inundating also other parts which no age in past centuries ever remembered to have seen watered by the waves of the sea. For rushing forth about the middle of the night, it suffocated or drowned men and women in their beds, with their babies sleeping in their cradles, swept away houses, torn up from the foundations, with all their contents lost without recovery into the waters. Many surrounded by the waters sought a place of refuge, and while they

[76] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. xlii.

[77] William of Newburgh, book iii. chap. i., "Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II., Richard I.," vol. i. p. 204, Rolls Series.

climbed the trees, overcome by cold, they were caught by the waters and drowned by falling. Whence it happened in the village of Hickeling that a hundred and eighty of both sexes and ages perished in the waters."[78] The Yorkshire houses were in danger from flooded rivers. Malton and Ellerton were on the Derwent, which often overflowed its flat banks. Watton[79] was also on a tributary of the same river.

Fires were terribly destructive in the Middle Ages, as wood was so much used for building. A fire broke out at Sempringham in the lifetime of S. Gilbert. "A nun bearing a light through the kitchen by night, fixed a part of a burnt candle to another she was going to burn, so that both were alight at once. But when the part fixed on to the other was almost consumed, it fell on the floor, on which much straw was collected ready for a fire. The nun did not heed it, and believing that the fire would go out by itself, she went away and shut the door. But the flame, finding food, first devoured the straw lying close by, then the whole house with the adjacent offices and their contents. Whence a great loss happened to the church."[80]

The church of Watton was burnt in 1167.[81] In 1280 the church of Mattersey was appropriated to the Priory to repair the losses of the Priory by a sudden fire. The writings belonging to Mattersey were burnt.[82] The charters and muniments of S. Edmund's, Cambridge, were burnt in 1348.[83]

The duty of hospitality was a heavy burden on the monasteries. In the Middle Ages there were but few inns, and the religious houses served as hostels for all travellers, rich or poor, who chose to ask for food and lodging for the night. No charge was made, and though gifts were some-

[78] Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes, p. 270, Rolls Series.
[79] Rot. Pat., 23 Henry VI., p. 1, m. 20.
[80] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra B. 1, f. 77.
[81] *Athenæum*, October 7, 1893.
[82] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 965 and note C.
[83] Cal. Rot. Pat., 5 Ric. II., p. 1, m. 13 d.

times given, they were utterly inadequate to meet expenses. Jocelin of Brakelond gave a striking instance: "King John immediately after his coronation, setting aside all other affairs, came down to S. Edmund's, drawn thither by his vow and by devotion. We, indeed, believed that he was come to make offering of some great matter; but all he offered was one silken cloth, which his servants had borrowed from our sacrist, and to this day they have not given the price of it. He availed himself of the hospitality of S. Edmund, which was attended with great expense, and upon his departure bestowed nothing at all either of honour or profit upon the saint, save thirteen easterling pence, which he offered at his mass on the day of his departure."[84] The canons and nuns of Sempringham were not so unfortunate as the monks of Bury when they entertained a king. Edward III. was at Sempringham from April 1st to the 7th in 1328; he granted a yearly pension of twenty pounds to Wencilian, whom his grandfather had sent there to be a nun.[85]

However, evidence is not wanting to prove that hospitality was sometimes a troublesome tax; the behaviour of Agnes de Vescy, who made long stays at Watton with a great number of women and dogs, has been already mentioned.[86]

The Gilbertines reached the high-water mark of prosperity in the reign of Edward I. Many canons and nuns were added to the Order; the sons and daughters of nobles and knights enriched the houses which they entered by the gifts of their parents. Building went on apace to shelter the growing number of inmates; money bought from a needy king the right to acquire lands and churches in spite of the Statute of Mortmain; the wool trade flourished. Yet, in comparison with other Orders, the Gilbertines were poor: in 1278 the amount of the fifteenth paid by the Master for all the houses was two

[84] Jocelin of Brakelond, p. 85, Camden Society.
[85] Cal. Rot. Pat., 1 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 27. [86] *Cf.* p. 83.

hundred pounds,[87] hence the total revenue can scarcely have exceeded three thousand pounds.

Within the space of twenty years poverty had taken the place of wealth. A combination of causes effected the change in the disastrous reign of Edward II. The unsettled state of the country was very unfavourable to the monasteries. Several of the Gilbertine houses suffered severe losses from the assaults of neighbouring knights, notwithstanding the papal ban of excommunication which threatened those who broke into cloisters for deeds of rapine and violence. Cattle were raided, crops trodden under foot, trees cut down, and banks of fisheries destroyed.

In 1309 the Prior of Malton complained that "John de Bordesden, with a crowd of armed men, removed his cattle when feeding in his common of pasture at Swinton, Amotherby, and Appleton, drove them to various places beyond the bridge of Neusham, so that many of them died from ill-usage; broke down the bridge, whereby he was unable to cross the bridge to replevy his cattle; entered his houses at Swinton, carried away his goods, and assaulted his men and servants."[88] But John de Bordesden had a few months before lodged his complaint against the Prior of Malton. "In the time of the late King the Prior of Malton, brother William de Roston, and others at night broke his houses at Neusham, carried away his goods, unroofed the houses, threw down their supports, and cut the timber thereof; that the Prior caused his several pasture at Neusham to be eaten down by cattle, and with others lay in wait to kill him, so that he dared not leave his house; that they also assaulted his men and servants working in his stone quarry and digging turves at Amotherby, took away their wages and ill-treated them; that they conspired to procure him to be indicted for trespasses against the king's peace, and on that account to be taken and detained in prison."[89] In May, 1316, justices

[87] Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ed. I., m. 24.

[88] Ibid., 2 Ed. II., p. 1, m. 17 d.

[89] Ibid., 2 Ed. II., m. 22 d.

were appointed to hear the complaint of the Prior of Watton. "Peter de Mauley, Hugh de Eland, Herbert de Sutton . . . and others, at Kilnwick co. York, opened a cart of the prior in which seven nuns were shut up and dragged them out of it, seized two other carts laden with harness, charters, privileges, muniments, and other goods of his, with the ten horses drawing them, and led them away, seized a hundred and forty oxen and forty horses yoked in his ploughs at Watton, contrary to the form of the statute of plough cattle, and drove them to the castle of the said Peter at Mulgrave, so that a hundred and sixty of his plough cattle died, detained the rest until the prior made fine with the said Peter in £20, seized four mares of his plough at Birdsall, and ten horses, two bulls, and ten cows at Howald, and drove them to some places unknown so that they could not be found to be replevied, and harassed the prior by distraints at Watton, Cawkeld, Howald, Kilnwick and Birdsall co. York, so that he could not till his lands in those towns, broke the doors and locks of his granary at Birdsall and carried away seven quarters of wheat, broke the doors of his stable at Tranby co. York, and carried away a horse, and broke the doors of his grange and granary there, and took and trampled under foot and consumed his wheat and oats in the said grange, and burned his house there, and at Watton carried off John de Hoton, his fellow canon, with his goods."[90] The destruction of charters, privileges, and muniments was a severe loss; evidence for the holding of each strip of land, and in support of every custom, was of the utmost importance. In 1319 Peter de Mauley owed the Prior of Watton four hundred pounds, probably as a fine for damages.[91]

The frequent occurrence of broils between the religious and their neighbours shows up the dark side of medieval life, the utter brutality of its deeds of violence. In the

[90] Cal. Rot. Pat., 9 Ed. II., p. 2, m. 16 d.
[91] Cal. Rot. Cl., 12 Ed. II., m. 12 d.

wars of the cities of Ancient Greece it was considered a shameful deed to cut down olive trees, because they would take so long to grown again.[92] No such scruples existed in England in the Middle Ages. In 1337 fifty men broke into the Priory of S. Margaret at Marlborough, burnt the trees and timber there.[93] In 1316 the Priory of S. Catherine's, Lincoln, lost "by hunger the greater part of five hundred sheep which were driven out of the close.[94] In 1330 certain knights broke the banks of the fishery at Haverholme, so that the water which flowed to the priory mills ran out through the breaches and flooded three hundred acres of meadow.[95]

Other instances besides the attack of the Prior of Malton on John de Bordesden showed that the religious avenged their wrongs in an unseemly way. They would not wait for the King's justice, but rode out with armed men to recover their cattle and inflict some damage on the enemy. Yet in 1303 Robert Mannynge wrote, as he sat in the cloister at Sempringham, that the fighting monk was guilty of the sin of sacrilege.

> "Also relygyous are to wyte
> That for maystry wyl gladly smyte;
> They oghe to be suffrable and meke
> And no foly on outher men seke,
> Hys tunge shulde be hys fauchoun,
> Hys strokes shulde be hys orysun;
> If any be yn foly stoute,
> Holde yn cloystre and com nat out."[96]

Nine years afterwards John, Prior of Sempringham, rode off with his canons and servants to the park at Birthorpe,[97]

[92] Herodotus, v. 82; Thucydides, vii. 29; Plato Republic, v. 470.

[93] Cal. Rot. Pat., 11 Ed. III., p. 2, m. 26 d. The Commission of Oyer and Terminer was issued on July 24, 1337.

[94] Ibid., 10 Ed. II., p. 1, m. 3 d.

[95] Ibid., 4 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 4 d. The Commission of Oyer and Terminer was issued on January 26, 1331.

[96] Robert Mannynge, "Handlyng Synne," p. 268, Roxburgh Club.

[97] Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ed. II., m. 23 d.

to recover the goods which Roger de Birthorpe and Geoffrey Luterel of Irnham had seized when they broke the doors and walls of Sempringham.[98]

1315–1321 were seven years of famine.[99] The greatest dearth known in England prevailed everywhere; the people died for want of food. The writer of the Annals of Sempringham [100] gave a brief account of it: "The summer was rainy, and there were great floods of water throughout England, and the wheat was destroyed, and the hay also, and there was great famine and great dearth of wheat through all the land. And the following year the quarter of wheat was sold at twenty-four shillings and more; and the quarter of barley at sixteen shillings, and the quarter of oats at twenty shillings.[101] There was also great pestilence and mortality among the common people, and the dearth and mortality lasted for a year and more." On February 14, 1316, Edward granted "protection for one year for the men and servants whom the Prior of Bullington is sending to the church of Prestwold in Leicester, which he holds for his own use, to transport corn and victuals from the parsonage thereof to the priory for the

[98] Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ed. II., p. 1, m. 20 d.

[99] Thorold Rogers, "History of Agriculture and Prices," vol. i. p. 197.

[100] The "Annals of Sempringham" are a continuation of "Le Livere de Reis de Engleterre," by Peter of Ickham, in the Vatican manuscript of his work. From 1280 the Annals are merely a collection of notes; from 1310 until the abrupt break in 1326 they are much fuller. From the mention by Peter of Ickham of the loyalty of the Gilbertine Order to Becket, and of the translation of S. Gilbert, as well as from the continuation from the Annals of Sempringham, it is possible to conjecture that Peter of Ickham may himself have been a canon of Sempringham and there have known Robert Mannynge. *Cf.* "Le Livere de Reis de Brittanie et Le Livere de Reis de Engleterre," pp. 323–355, Rolls Series.

[101] The prices in 1287, a year of plenty, show how high they were in 1315. "The quarter of wheat was sold at twenty pence, the quarter of barley at twenty-six pence, the quarter of oats at two shillings" ("Annals of Sempringham," pp. 331, 325, Rolls Series).

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[*Facing p.* 140.

sustenance of himself, and of the canons, nuns, and others dwelling therein." [102]

In 1319 "there was a great murrain of cattle, and a general earthquake with great sound and much noise." [103]

The Master of Sempringham and his Order were deeply interested in the struggle between Edward II. and his barons. In 1307 Henry de Beaumont [104] received the manors of Folkingham and Edenham,[105] which the Prior and Convent had held at ferm for the King since 1302.[106] In October, 1311, he was removed from the King's Council, but he returned from exile with Piers Gaveston in January, 1312, and joined Edward at Newcastle.[107] The Earl of Lancaster seized the town and castle. Piers and Henry fled by ship to Scarborough, where they were besieged in the castle and were obliged to surrender on May 19th.[108] However, Henry was a benefactor to Sempringham: in 1311, at his request, Edward II. granted to the Prior and Convent the right of appropriating the church of Whissendine in mortmain [109] because the Priory Church had fallen into disrepair and the expenses were too heavy for the convent.[110] Only ten years before Prior John de Camelton began to build a new church.[111]

[102] Cal. Rot. Pat., 9 Ed. II., p. 1, m. 4.

[103] "Annals of Sempringham," p. 337, Rolls Series.

[104] "Henry de Beaumont was the son of Lewis of Brienne, Viscount of Beaumont in Maine, and grandson of John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem and Emperor of Constantinople." Edward gave him the Isle of Man. Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. ii. p. 345 and note.

[105] Cal. Rot. Cl., 1 Ed. II., m. 19.

[106] Cal. Rot. Pat., 31 Ed. I., m. 41. The fifth Gilbert de Gant died without issue 26 Ed. I., leaving his lands in Lincolnshire to Edward. *Cf.* Dugdale, "The Baronage of England," vol. i. p. 401.

[107] "Annals of Sempringham," p. 329, Rolls Series.

[108] Ibid., p. 329.

[109] Cal. Rot. Pat., 4 Ed. II., p. 2, m. 27.

[110] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. iii. p. 606. In 1317 Edward II. wrote to John XXII. for his consent to the appropriation. Perhaps Cardinal "Sir Luke de Flisk," who was at Sempringham on November 2, 1317, also wrote. *Cf.* "Annals of Sempringham," p. 335. The appropriation was made by Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, at Northampton, on January 25, 1319, under the papal mandate. *Cf.* Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. ii. p. 273.

[111] "Annals of Sempringham," p. 327.

Thomas of Lancaster was an enemy, for he had seized and kept for himself some lands of the Templars which Edward had granted to S. Catherine's without Lincoln.[112] The Master of Sempringham[113] was summoned to the Parliament at Westminster, in July, 1321, in which the De Spensers were condemned to forfeiture and exile. Three months later Edward took up arms. The Master of Sempringham was requested to send as many foot soldiers as he could to the muster at Coventry, on February 28, 1322, to march against the rebels or adherents of the Earl of Lancaster.[114] The Annals of Sempringham contain an account of the rising. The writer recorded Edward's victory at Boroughbridge and his terrible vengeance on the conspirators; he gave, without any comment, a long list of knights who were hanged, drawn, and quartered, showing the characteristic medieval indifference to human life.[115] In the Parliament which met at York on May 2, 1322, "Margaret, Countess of Cornwall, wife of Sir Hugh de Audley and niece of the King, was judged to continue in guard at Sempringham among the nuns, where she arrived on May 16th and continued there."[116] Two years later "Joan, the daughter of Sir Roger de Mortimer of Wigmore who escaped out of the Tower of London, was sent to Sempringham by the King, whither she came on Whitsun Eve, the second day of June."[117]

Building and the purchase of lands probably strained the resources of the houses and made them short of ready money. In 1306 Sempringham needed to appropriate the church of Fordham to meet the expenses of the general chapter,[118] the churches of Thurstanton and Norton Disney for the rebuilding of the monastery in 1306,[119] and the

[112] Cal. Rot. Cl., 8 Ed. III., m. 33.
[113] Parliamentary Writs, vol. ii. part 1, p. 234, No. 2.
[114] Ibid., p. 550, No. 54.
[115] "Annals of Sempringham," p. 343.
[116] Ibid., p. 343.
[117] Ibid., p. 351.
[118] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. ii. p. 14, 1 Clement V.
[119] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 14, 1 Clement V.

church of Whissendine to repair its church in 1319.[120] In 1327 the revenues of Sempringham were not enough to support forty canons and two hundred sisters, and the payment of forty marks by the monastery of Paisley had ceased for fourteen years by reason of the Scotch wars.[121]

The need of ready money forced the Gilbertines to borrow from the Italian merchants. They had come to England to collect the Pope's moneys in the reign of Henry III.; at the same time they carried on a large business, exporting wool to Italy to the value of the payments which they received for the Pope.[122] As they held large sums in their hands, they took the place of the Jews as money-lenders. They avoided the charge of taking usury, which was forbidden by the canon law, by skilful devices. "In those days (1285)," wrote Matthew Paris, "the hateful scourge of the Caursines prevailed, so that there was scarcely any one in the whole of England, especially an ecclesiastic, who did not complain that he was now in their nets. Even the King himself was bound to them by an immense debt. For they were circumventing the needy in their necessities, cloaking their usury under the show of trade; they pretend that they do not know that whatever is added to the principal is usury, under whatever name it be called. For it is manifest that their loans are not made in the way of charity, since they stretch not out a helping hand to the needy to relieve them, but to deceive them; not to succour the hunger of others, but to gratify their own avarice, since the motive judges the deeds of men."[123] The monk gave an instance of a bond with the Caursines. A sum of a hundred and four marks was borrowed on April 24th, to be repaid without interest on August 1st at the New Temple in

[120] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. iv. p. 606.

[121] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. ii. p. 273, 12 John XXII.

[122] Cunningham, "The Growth of English Industry and Commerce," p. 207.

[123] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. iii. p. 328.

London. If the borrowers failed to find the money, they were to pay interest at the rate of ten per cent. every two months, *i.e.*, sixty per cent. per annum as well as certain other charges of the merchants. Interest was nominally demanded to cover expenses incurred in sending for the money every two months. The papal court encouraged the Caursines, mindful, said Matthew Paris, of the saying of the Gospel: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."[124]

Numerous entries on the Patent and Close Rolls of Edward II. and Edward III. show that many of the Gilbertine houses failed to meet their obligations. The difficulties of Sempringham and Chicksands are given as examples.

Sempringham.

1320. The Prior of Sempringham acknowledges for himself and his convent that he owes to Geoffrey de Bramtone, clerk, £1,000, to be levied in default of payment of their lands and chattels co. Lincoln.[125]

1324. John of Sempringham acknowledges for himself and his Convent that he owes to Antony Maloisel of Genoa £100.[126]

1325. John de Glenton, Prior of Sempringham, acknowledges for himself and his Convent that he owes to Annotus Grimbaldi of Chieri £80. . . .[127]

1326. John de Glenton, Prior of Sempringham, acknowledges for himself and his Convent that he owes to Bartholomew Richi of Chieri, merchant, £40.[128]

1329. Thomas de Holm of Beverley, merchant, puts in his place Thomas de Sprotte, clerk, and John de Wilton to prosecute the execution of a recognisance for

[124] Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora," vol. iii. p. 329.
[125] Cal. Rot. Cl. 14 Ed. II., m. 18 d.
[126] Ibid., 18 Ed. II. m. 28 d.
[127] Ibid., 19 Ed. II., m. 26 d.
[128] Ibid., 20 Ed. II., m. 13 d.

£10 made to him in Chancery by John, Prior of Sempringham.[129]

1331. John de Glenton acknowledges for himself and his Convent that he owes to William de Kendale of Glenton £20.[130]

In the midst of their embarrassment, in 1332, the King requested the Prior to grant a subsidy in aid of the expenses incurred for the marriage of the King's sister Eleanor to Reginald, Count of Guelders, the granting of which subsidy should not be drawn into a precedent to his prejudice.[131]

Inability to pay the King's taxes marked a financial crisis. In 1337 the King granted a pardon to the Prior and Convent, the Prioress and nuns of Sempringham of £39 15s. 7d., their contingent for the tenth of the first year of the last three yearly tenth granted by the clergy of the province of Canterbury.[132]

Chicksand Priory was in a worse plight.

1320. John, Prior of Chicksand, acknowledges for himself and his Convent that he owes to Manent Francisci, merchant of Florence, and John and Mannus, his brothers, £120, to be levied in default of payment of his lands and chattels in co. Bedford. This debt he afterwards paid.[133]

1325. On the Close Roll of this year is the enrolment of a deed of John Puisaquilla of Genoa, citizen and merchant of London, witnessing that whereas the Prior and Convent of Chicksand lately demised to Bartholomew Richi, and to the said John, for their lives, and their heirs, executors, or assigns for twenty years after their deaths, the Prior and Convent's manors called "the chapel of S. Thomas" in Meppershall, and Hawnes Grange in Hawnes for £200 to be paid yearly to the Prior and

[129] Cal. Rot. Cl., 3 Ed. III., m. 6 d.
[130] Ibid., 5 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 8 d.
[131] Ibid., 6 Ed. III., m. 16 d.
[132] Cal. Rot. Pat., 11 Ed. III., p. 3, m. 18.
[133] Cal. Rot. Cl., 13 Ed. II., m. 5 d.

Convent, and also granted to them the fruits of their church of Hawnes for seven years, and sold to them their woods called "Appelee" and "Inwode," retaining the soil thereof, and the Prior and Convent are moreover bound to Bartholomew and John in 3,300 florins of gold, and the said B. and J. granted that if the Prior and Convent pay £1,200 at certain days and places in the deed, then the deeds aforenamed shall be annulled. John acknowledges that he has received from the Prior £300, a quarter of the aforesaid debt.[134]

1330. The King issued an order to the treasurer and barons of the Exchequer "to cause the Prior and canons of Chicksand to have respite for a year for the tenth due from them, as the Prior and canons have besought the King to grant them some respite, because they are so much in debt that all the manors, lands, rents, and churches pertaining to the priory are now in the hands of creditors, whereby they are so impoverished that they have not whereof they may be sustained, and many of the canons and nuns of the priory have been dispersed by the Prior for this reason.[135]

1331. The King issued an order to cause the Prior and Convent of Chicksand to be discharged of £10 of the £17 9s. 7d. exacted from them for the tenth, "because they are so much in debt that they are now unable to make alms and other works of charity there."[136]

In 1335 and 1337 the Prior and Convent of Chicksand were likewise pardoned for the tenths.[137]

Malton, Watton, S. Andrew's outside York, S. Catherine's outside Lincoln, Fordham, Cattley, and Shouldham were all in debt.[138] English merchants followed the example of the

[134] Cal. Rot. Cl., 18 Ed. II., m. 4.

[135] Ibid., 4 Ed. III., m. 24. [136] Ibid., 5 Ed. III., m. 1.

[137] Cal. Rot. Pat., 9 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 14 and 11 Ed. III., p. 3, m. 28.

[138] Cal. Rot. Cl., 7 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 13 d, 7 Ed. III. p. 1, m. 11 d, 9 Ed. III. m. 35 d, 4 Ed. III., m. 41 d, 14 Ed. II., m. 5 d; Cal. Rot. Pat., 12 Ed. III., p, 1, m. 7, 4 Ric. II., p. 1, m. 27.

Italians in the reign of Edward III. On August 14, 1335, William, Prior of Malton, and the Convent, owed Thomas de Holm of Beverley, 127 sacks and 4 stones of wool of the price of 1,393 marks and 10 pence, besides £446 10s.[139] William de Melton, Archbishop of York, lent money to Malton, Watton, and S. Catherine's outside Lincoln.[140]

"When troubles come, they come not single spies, but in battalions." The Prior of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln had letters from the King, enabling him to send out brothers to collect alms for the infirm of the hospital of S. Sepulchre; in 1328 Edward III. issued a mandate for five years to sheriffs, bailiffs, and others, to arrest unauthorised persons who were converting the contributions to their own use.[141] In 1348 an attempt was made to mulct the house of twenty-five pounds yearly by means of an ingenious forgery.[142] A document dated the eleventh year of John, with the seals of Hugh of Wells, Bishop of Lincoln, and others attached, was produced; by it the Prior and Convent were bound to pay yearly twenty pounds to the Queen and five pounds to the House of the Innocents, which lay to the east of the priory, and further to maintain twenty-six chaplains to celebrate masses for the Kings of England daily for ever. The Prior proved that the deed was false: it was impossible for the house to find twenty-six chaplains, and as for the money payment, the possessions of the house were not sufficient for its burdens.

Poverty was probably the reason why the Prior and canons of Holland Brigg neglected their local duties. Nowhere has the country round a Gilbertine priory changed so completely. A good high-road, with fields on every side, has taken the place of the deep, dangerous fen with its thirty bridges. After providing for their maintenance the

[139] Cal. Rot. Cl., 9 Ed. III., m. 12 d.

[140] Ibid., 7 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 13 d; 7 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 11 d; 7 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 14 d.

[141] Cal. Rot. Pat., 2 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 2.

[142] Ibid., 22 Ed. III., p. 2, m. 16.

canons were bound to keep the bridges in repair. They obtained a bull from the Pope authorising them to collect for the purpose, and several great men bequeathed them moneys.[143] In 1263 the jurors complained that the canons had not repaired Holland Causey, although twenty years before it had been damaged by a great flood; they had spent the money on buying lands for their own profit.[144] Whether from lack of funds or not, the Prior of S. Saviour's continued to neglect the repairs of the bridges. Edward I. granted the right of taking tolls from all who crossed,[145] and his successors renewed it.[146] In spite of this, numerous complaints reached the King. In 1325 "the Prior of S. Saviour's did suffer ten bridges at Holland Bridge to go to ruin."[147] In 1331 the people of Kesteven and Holland petitioned in Parliament that "since the Prior of S. Saviour's has done nothing to the road and bridges, so that a man cannot pass on horse or on foot without peril of life, and has taken the tolls, they will assign auditors to the Prior."[148] The petition was granted. In 1332 it was discovered by inquisition that the Prior ought to repair the road and the thirty bridges over it.[149] The Prior appeared in the parliament at York and showed that Godwin of Lincoln left the property to the brothers to provide for their support, afterwards with what remained for the repair of the road. The property barely sufficed for their sustenance. The Prior continued to appropriate the tolls, and the bridges remained in a dangerous state for years. In 1379 the King granted a license for the Prior to beg for seven years throughout England for money towards the

[143] Dugdale, "History of Imbanking and Draining," p. 219, before 47 Henry III. [144] Ibid.

[145] Cal. Rot. Pat., 35 Ed. I., m. 37.

[146] Ibid., 3 Ed. III., m. 11 d; 10 Ed. III., m. 37 d, &c.; 3 Ric. II., m. 18.

[147] Dugdale, "History of Imbanking and Draining," p. 202 (7) and (10).

[148] Rolls of Parliament, vol. ii. p. 32 a.

[149] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 969, ex. Rot. Cl., 7 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 24.

repairs.[150] Such neglect was common enough in the Middle Ages; the history of even the most important bridges is a series of falls and repairs.[151] The state of the bridge was a permanent source of discontent in the neighbourhood. In 1316 the Prior of Haverholme was a like offender: the jurors said that "the south side of the water from Happeltreness to Kyme was in decay through the fault of the Prior of Haverholme, who ought to repair a great part of it and refused." And also that he ought to provide a certain boat at the Bothe near Watemouth to carry "footfolks" over that water by night as well as by day, so often as any man should have occasion to pass that way, and that he did not do it, to the great damage of passengers travelling there.[152]

A high rate of interest, and undiminished, if not increasing, expenses made it almost impossible for a monastery to get clear of debt. The struggle with poverty and debt throws light on the attempts of the religious to get more lands and to appropriate churches in spite of the Statute of Mortmain. Edward III. granted numerous licenses to the Gilbertine houses to acquire churches and lands to the value of five marks and more.[153] Dire necessity was the motive of many of the religious, not "more servants, more idlers, more dishes,"[154] as Thomas Gascoigne wrote in the first half of the fifteenth century. That they should hold more and more lands and churches was not for the welfare of the nation, yet it is difficult to judge them severely, because they put the interests of their house and Order before all else. A corporate body tends to have a narrow outlook, and often fails to sacrifice itself to wider public interests.

[150] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 969, ex. MS. Harleian 433, fol. 194.
[151] Jusserand, "English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages," p. 67.
[152] Dugdale, "History of Imbanking and Drainage," pp. 200, 201 (11) and (12).
[153] Cal. Rot. Pat., 1 Ed. III., p. 2, m., 10; 4 Ed. III. p. 2, m., 5, &c.
[154] Gascoigne, "Loci e Libro Veritatis," p. lxxx.; cf. p. 106, 111, 115.

The King's inability to meet his own obligations in 1345 ultimately released the monasteries from theirs: the Bardi were utterly ruined, the Lombard merchants left the country without paying their debts or collecting those due to them.[155] Had not this means of escape been provided, other houses must have suffered the fate of Chicksand, parted with their lands to creditors, and dismissed some of their members.

The Black Death swept over England in 1348 and 1349. Half the nation perished in its terrible havoc. No record remains of the deaths in the Gilbertine houses, but the religious suffered severely everywhere. At Westminster Abbey, Abbot Bircheston and twenty-seven monks died; at S. Alban's, the Abbot and forty-seven monks; at Croxton, all but the Abbot and Prior; at Meaux only ten monks and no lay-brethren were left out of fifty monks and lay-brethren.[156] The Black Death was most disastrous to the Order of Sempringham. It is probable that at least half of its members perished, and novices were not forthcoming to fill the empty places. None of the monastic Orders ever recovered their full numbers or their spiritual efficiency.[157] In 1382 the Master and Priors of Sempringham received a license to seize and detain all vagabond canons and lay-brothers of the Order.[158]

The economic results of the pestilence were no less fatal. The sheep were afflicted by it and died in thousands everywhere.[159] The harvest rotted for lack of labourers to reap it. The scarcity of labourers produced a great and

[155] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. ii. p. 561; Cunningham, "The Growth of English Industry and Commerce," p. 289.

[156] Gasquet, "The Great Pestilence," pp. 97, 140, 152.

[157] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 7.

[158] Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ric. II., p. 2, m. 29. In the following year the King sent a mandate to sheriffs and others to arrest and deliver to William Prestwold, Master of the Order of Sempringham, John de Whiteby, apostate canon of that Order. Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ric. II., p. 2, m. 11 d.

[159] Knighton, "Chronicle," vol. ii. p. 61, Rolls Series.

permanent rise in wages, about fifty per cent. for men and a hundred per cent. for women.[160] Many were attracted into the ranks of labourers who might otherwise have become lay-brothers and given their services for nothing; therefore the monasteries were obliged to pay higher wages to increased numbers of hired servants. The price of all commodities whose principal value depended on labour was much exalted; all the ordinary articles needed for agriculture, such as wheels, nails, and millstones were doubled in value. The price of agricultural products remained fixed; thus the Gilbertines, whose chief source of support was wool, were greatly impoverished. Under these circumstances the religious, like other capitalist landlords, gave up the old system of cultivation, and let out their lands on lease. In 1535 the Prior and Convent of Alvingham held "in their own hands" as demesne land only 80 acres of arable land, 100 acres of meadow, and 100 acres of pasture, which were worth in all £20 a year.[161] The rents of their lands in Lincolnshire amounted to £70 8s. 4d. At North Ormesby, 80 acres of arable land, 60 of meadow, and 25 of pasture, worth only £4 a year, comprised the demesne land. The rents of lands "in the hands of others" were £70.[162]

The religious sought more lands to relieve their distress. On January 12, 1350, Edward III., "considering the slender means of the house of S. Margaret's near Marlborough, and the poverty of the Prior and canons," granted a license for the gift of some land.[163] The grant of the church of Haccomby, valued at twenty-four marks yearly, on November 9, 1349, was for the clothing of the nuns of Sempringham.[164] But the age of the popularity of the monasteries was past. Pious founders built schools and

[160] Thorold Rogers, "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," p. 237.
[161] "Valor Ecclesiasticus," vol. iv. p. 58.
[162] Ibid., vol. iv. p. 59.
[163] Rot. Pat., 23 Ed. III., p. 3, m. 3 & 4.
[164] Ibid., 23 Ed. III., p. 3, m. 19; 36 Ed. III., p. 1, m. 1.

colleges instead of helping the religious. The influence of Langland and Wycliffe tended against them.

The conservative character of corporations made the monasteries the worst offenders among the landlords who exacted every due from their villeins, refused to commute their services for money, and, supported by the Statute of Labourers, underpaid their hired servants. There is no evidence of any assault on the Gilbertine houses in the Peasant Rising in 1381, but many monasteries of other Orders were fiercely attacked. The rising was the outcome of widespread dissatisfaction, and was organised throughout East Anglia, perhaps as far north as the Humber.[165] Acts of violence are recorded in South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Wiltshire;[166] and the Gilbertines in these counties must have lived in constant fear. On the Eve of S. John the Baptist's Day, about four hundred armed peasants made a fierce midnight onslaught on the Abbey of S. Benet Holme. The Abbot and Convent, who were disturbed at matins, held their own with difficulty.[167] On Saturday, June 15th, there were serious riots in Cambridge, the college and hospital of Corpus Christi were sacked, documents were taken out of churches and burnt.[168] On June 17th, the Mayor, townsmen, and rioters attacked Barnwell Priory.[169]

After the rising was put down the monasteries remained implacable. However, the terrible vengeance taken by the King's justice had not completely crushed the peasants, and they banded together to resist their lords in Somersetshire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Cornwall, and Suffolk.[170] In 1384 Richard II. appointed a commission of oyer and terminer "touching the withdrawal by the bondmen and

[165] Edgar Powell, "The Rising in East Anglia," p. 57.
[166] Trevelyan, "England in the Age of Wycliffe," p. 254, map.
[167] Edgar Powell, "The Rising in East Anglia," p. 34.
[168] Ibid., p. 51. [169] Ibid., p. 52.
[170] Trevelyan, "England in the Age of Wycliffe," pp. 254, 255.

bond tenants of the Prior of Newstead-on-Ancholme, and their banding together to resist the Prior." [171]

The question of villeinage solved itself in the course of the fifteenth century. The services of the villein were no longer needed when the lord had abandoned the cultivation of the demesne lands.[172]

The history of the Order in the fifteenth century is shrouded in darkness. The entries on the King's Rolls are very few, and there is no other record.

Geoffrey Wymeswold, Prior of Malton, with his canons and tenants, joined Scrope, Archbishop of York, in the rebellion against Henry IV. in 1405.[173] The "priestly rout" met the King's forces at Shipton Moor.[174] The Earl of Westmoreland offered a parley, and promised to put the demands of the rebels before the King. Scrope and Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, were treacherously detained by the Earl of Westmoreland, and, being without leaders, their followers dispersed. The Archbishop and Mowbray were executed for treason on June 8, 1405.

An occasional ray of light reveals a struggle with grinding poverty. The payment of the tenths for the wars of the three Henries must have been a heavy burden, and yet the Commons were clamouring for the confiscation of the property of the Church. In 1445 Henry VI. granted for himself and his successors, to Nicholas Resby, Master of the Order, that the houses of the Order should be free and exempt from all aids, subsidies, and tallages, and should never contribute to any payments of tenths or fifteenths made by the whole body of the clergy, or of the provinces of Canterbury and York separately.[175] The exemption had been previously granted to Watton on

[171] Cal. Rot. Pat., 8 Ric. II., p. 1, m. 43 d.

[172] *English Historical Review*, January, 1900, "The Disappearance of English Serfdom."

[173] Rot. Pat., 6 Henry IV., p. 2, m. 10.

[174] Wylie, "History of England under Henry IV.," vol. ii. p. 220.

[175] Rot. Pat., 23 Henry VI., p. 1, m. 4.

account of its notorious poverty, which was due to floods and other causes; the revenues of the house did not suffice for its expenses and the support of its inmates.[176]

During the Wars of the Roses the country through which the armies passed suffered greatly; the commissariat and transport were often obtained by plunder. In 1460 the northern army of Queen Margaret, "after they were once passed the river of Trent, spoiled and wasted the countrey afore them. Andrew Trollope, grand captaine, and as it were leader of the battell, with a great armie of Scots, Welchmen, and other strangere, beside the northern men, destroyed the towns of Grantham, Stanford, Peterborrow, Huntingdon, Roiston, Melleborne, and in maner all the townes by the way into Saint Albons, sparing neither Abbeis, Priories, or Parish Churches, but bare away crosses, chalices, bookes, ornaments, and other things whatsoever was worth the carriage, as though they had beene Saracens and no Christians."[177] Several chroniclers bore witness to the general terror of their approach. "Like locusts do they come and devour the fields," wrote John Whethamstede, Abbot of S. Alban's, "a treacherous people ready for rapine, with the hundred-handed grasp of Briareus."[178]

In 1462 Edward IV. released Prior Richard Wakefield and the Convent of Sixhills from a rent of eight marks, as all the lands and possessions of the Priory for the sustenance of twenty-eight persons and the support of other burdens did not exceed the value of forty pounds yearly.[179] The house must have suffered a great loss, for its revenues at the Dissolution were £170 8s. 9d.[180] Edward pardoned the royal foundation of Newstead-on-Ancholme a rent of a hundred shillings

[176] Rot. Pat., 23 Henry VI., p. 1, m. 20.
[177] Stow, "Annals of England," p. 413.
[178] "Political Songs," vol. ii. p. 262, Rolls Series.
[179] Cal. Rot. Pat., 2 Ed. IV., p. 1, m. 6.
[180] "Valor Ecclesiasticus," vol. iv. p. 83.

for lands in Lincolnshire, which had fallen in value to ten shillings yearly.[181]

In the midst of the harassing struggle with poverty, Master Nicholas Resby had the pleasure of receiving an English life of S. Gilbert of Sempringham,[182] dedicated to him by John Capgrave, an Austin Friar of Lynn, whom he perhaps knew at Cambridge.

But though the standard of spiritual life of the religious had fallen in the fourteenth century, there is no direct evidence of any marked change in morals. The founders of all monastic Orders realised that no life of religion could utterly expel human frailty from all who shared in it.[183] One scandal might blacken the fame of a whole house, and the religious always had enemies. It is significant that Nigellus Wirecker,[184] in his famous satire of "Brunellus," at the end of the twelfth century, lashed the new monastic Orders as severely as the author of the French poem of "The Order of Fair Ease," who wrote more than a hundred years later. Both invented a monastic Order which had what they deemed the characteristic features of all the others. Nigellus Wirecker knew not what to borrow from the Order of Sempringham, but he doubted it much.[185] The author of "The Order of Fair Ease" wrote: "In this Order of which I tell you, it is first ordained that those who shall belong to the Order shall have one point of Sempringham which will be very agreeable, as the Abbey of Sempringham has, brothers and sisters together; it is a good order as it seems to me. But, so far, in truth it is changed, that at Sempringham there must be between the brothers and sisters (a thing which displeases many)

[181] Cal. Rot. Pat., 3 Ed. IV., p. 1, m. 9.

[182] MS. Cotton, Vitellius D. xv. 4.

[183] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lxxi. Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. i. p. 493, 1 Nicholas IV.

[184] He was a monk, and Precentor of Canterbury Cathedral, in the latter part of Henry II.'s reign.

[185] "Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century," vol. i. pp. 94, 96, Rolls Series.

ditches and walls of high measure; but in this Order of Fair Ease there must be neither ditch nor wall nor any other impediment to hinder the brethren at their pleasure from visiting the sisters, nor shall there be any watch-word. . . . From thence also it is provided that they who shall enter the Order, must be well entertained by an Abbot; and this our master commands to eat well and plentifully three times a day and oftener. And if they do it for company, the Order on that account shall not be the worse." [186]

The poems of Walter Mapes were severe satires on monastic life in the twelfth century, when it was perhaps at its best after the great revival in Stephen's reign.[187] It is not possible to disregard the poems of the twelfth century, and to put full credence in those of the fourteenth, which are generally believed to condemn the monks. The love for the poor and suffering which inspired S. Francis of Assisi, drove Langland to believe that life in the world was better for humanity than life in the cloister. He accused the religious of idle selfishness, and prophesied of their fall:—

"Ac ther shal come a kyng,
And confesse yow religiouses,
And bete yow as the Bible telleth
For brekynge of youre rule;
And amende monyals,
Monkes and chanons,
And puten to hir penaunce
Ad pristinum statum ire;
And barons with erles beten hem
Thorugh Beatus-virres techyng,
That hir barnes claymen
And blame yow fowle."

. . . .

And thanne shal the abbot of Abyngdone,
And al his issue for evere,
Have a knok of a kyng,
And incurable the wound." [188]

[186] "Political Songs," p. 137, Camden Society.

[187] "The Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes," Camden Society.

[188] Langland, "The Vision of Piers Ploughman," passus x. p. 192, ed. Wright.

Wycliffe, Langland, and many other writers of less note, aimed their fiercest invectives against the Friars, whom they charged with many coarse sins of the flesh.

Chaucer's description of the monk who travelled with the other pilgrims from the Tabard Inn, at Southwark, to the shrine of S. Thomas, at Canterbury, has given rise to the general belief that the monk and canon of the fourteenth century indulged in field sports:—

> "An out-rydere, that lovede venerye.
> . . . . .
> He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
> That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
> Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
> Is likned till a fish that is waterlees,
> . . . . .
> Therfor he was a pricasour aright,
> Grehoundes he hadde, as swift as fowel in flight;
> Of priking and of hunting for the hare
> Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare." [189]

The belief is supported by other testimony as well as by the numerous grants of free warren to the religious.[190] However, hunting was a diversion for knights who sought hospitality.[191] Some of the religious were perhaps as innocent as Sampson, Abbot of Bury S. Edmund's, at the end of the twelfth century. "He enclosed many parks, which he filled with beasts of chase, keeping a huntsman with dogs; and upon the visit of any person of great name, sat with his monks in some walk of the wood, and sometimes saw the coursing of the dogs, but I never saw him taste of the game.[192]

[189] Chaucer, "The Prologue," p. 7, Clarendon Press.

[190] Cart. V., Ed. III., &c.

[191] Gasquet, "The Old English Bible and other Essays," p. 254.

[192] "Jocelin of Brackelond," p. 21, Camden Society. In the reign of Henry VII. the Priors of Watton and Malton received presents of deer killed by Leo Pershey, forester in fee of Pickering. North Riding Record Society, New Series, vol. i. pp. 141, 143, 144, 6, 8, & 9 Henry VII.

S. Gilbert himself would not have approved of the conduct of William de Spalding, canon of Shouldham in 1321. "During a game at ball, as he kicked the ball, a lay friend of his, also called William, ran against him, and wounded himself on a sheathed knife carried by the canon so severely that he died within six days. Feeling deeply the death of his friend, and fearing what might be said by his enemies, he applied to the Pope. John XXII. granted him a dispensation, as no blame was attached to him." [193]

In the time of Chaucer, Wycliffe, and Langland, all the monastic Orders and the Friars had fallen away from the high ideal of the founders. Yet it would have been strange, if they alone out of every class of the nation had not deteriorated. "The fourteenth century," wrote the Bishop of Oxford, "is on the whole unattractive, and in England especially so." [194] The hollow brilliance of the French wars and the fantastic extravagance of the court contrasted with the misery of the people depicted in "Piers the Ploughman." The leaders among the barons were self-seekers; Thomas of Lancaster was an unworthy successor of Simon de Montfort, and John of Gaunt fell lower still. Arundel, Courtenay, and the rest of the bishops bore a far inferior stamp to that of Edmund Rich and Grosseteste; they were courtiers, not saintly prelates. The gulf between Edward I. and his descendants is perhaps the greatest of all.

One Gilbertine who lived in the reigns of the three Edwards has left a record of himself and his times. Robert Mannynge of Brunne was a native of Bourn, in Lincolnshire; in 1303 he had dwelt fifteen years at Sempringham, and in 1338 he was living at Sixhills. It has been suggested that he was perhaps a lay-brother, or a canon not in full orders, from his awe of priests in 1303.[195]

[193] Calendar of Papal Letters, vol. ii. p. 214, 5 John XXII.

[194] Stubbs, "Constitutional History," vol. ii. p. 654.

[195] "The Story of England," by Robert Manning. *Cf.* Brunne, Introduction, p. v., ed. Furnivall, Rolls Series.

It is unlikely that he was a lay-brother; though the rule which forbade any lay-brother to learn to read[196] may have been relaxed, a lay-brother would not be one of the few chosen out for the special privilege of study at the Cambridge house of the Order. He was probably sent there from Sempringham; he told how at Cambridge he knew Robert Bruce and his brothers, Thomas and Alexander, of whom Alexander was the best artist of his day and made a carven king.[197] He was present at the feast which Robert made, perhaps at his inception for his degree.[198] Nothing else is known of his life. He was well educated, keenly observant, cheerful, and anxious to help his fellow-men. In 1303 he began "Handlyng Synne," an English version of Waddington's "Manuel des Péchés," written in Edward I.'s time, a satire on the failings and vices of English men and women of all classes of society. His own preface best describes the man and his purpose:—

> "For lewdë men y vndyrtoke
> On englyssh tunge to make thys boke.
> For many ben of swyche manere,
> That talys and rymys wyl blethly here:
> Yn gamys and festys, and at the ale,
> Love men to lestene trotëuale,
> That may falle ofte to vylanye
> To dedly synne or other folye;
> For swyche men haue I made thes ryme
> That they may weyl dyspende here tyme.
> To allë crystyn men vndir sunne,
> And to godë men of Brunne
> And speciali allë be name
> The felaushepe of Symprynghame,
> Roberde of Brunnë greteth yow
> In al godenesse that may to prow." [199]

"The Earl and Knight at their robbery; the Lord in his

[196] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. lx.

[197] "The Story of England," Introduction, p. xii.; Peter of Langtoft, ed. Hearne, vol. i. p. 336.

[198] Ibid.

[199] "Handlyng Synne," p. 2, ll. 43–52, p. 3, ll. 57–62, Roxburgh Club.

grasping; the Rich Man in his oaths, his adultery, his gluttony, his sloth, and his indulgence to his children in their insolent ways; the Landowner in his covetousness; the Priest with his 'Mare' or Concubine; the Judge and Assizer in their harshness; the Lawyer with his wicked counsels; the Merchant in his usury; the Trader at his tricks; the Scold in her household; the Flunkey of the time at his riotous supper; the Poor in their sufferings; the Bearded Bucks; the Beauties with their saffron wimples and whitened faces, all pass under Robert of Brunne's review; and none without those individualising touches which show that he had studied from the life." [200]

Had the religious been as depraved as the writer of "The Order of Fair Ease" implied, they could not have escaped Robert's lash. He brought no serious charge against them; in two or three instances he spoke severely of their failings. A monk of the Abbey Tangbaton reported to be of holy life, summoned his brethren to his deathbed, and told them, that when they thought he fasted, he used to eat twice privily, and when they thought he had been "holy" he had eaten and drunk full lustily; 'and now the devil has tied up my knees with his tail and stopped my mouth with his head, and I am forlore."

> "Ypocrisye, thys ys the synne,
> Feyre withe oute, and foule with ynne." [201]

"A certain monk was a 'felun' in backbiting, and after his death a brother monk saw him at midnight sitting before the steps of the altar continually spitting out his tongue (which was all burning) and eating it up again—'he gnoghe hyt ynwarde al to pecys,'—and this was to punish him for his sin, for our Lord in the Apocalypse says that liars and backbiters 'shall ete here tunges in peynes.'" [202]

[200] "Handlyng Synne," Preface, pp. viii., ix.
[201] Ibid., p. li., *cf.* pp. 100–102, ll. 3156–3199.
[202] Ibid., pp. 113–117, ll. 3556–3647.

In 1338 he wrote his "Story of England," a chronicle in simple speech for love of unlearned men,

> "To tellë tham the chaunces bolde,
> That here before was don and tolde.
> For this makyng I will no mede
> Bot gude prayere when ye it rede." [203]

[203] "The Story of England," vol. i. p. 3, ll. 73, 77, and p. iv. ll. 127–130, Rolls Series.

VII

THE DISSOLUTION

THE Dissolution of the Monasteries seemed to Henry VIII. and Cromwell a necessary consequence of the breach with the Papacy. They saw strongholds of the papal power in the religious houses,[1] and the spoils were, to them, an irresistible bait.

Precedents were ready to hand. In 1414 Henry V., with the consent of Parliament, confiscated the property of the Alien Priories, on the plea that in time of war English money was sent abroad to help the King's enemies.[2] Some of the revenues he used to carry on the war with France, thus lightening the burden of taxation; with part of the property he himself endowed the new monasteries of the Carthusians at Shene and the Bridgettines at Sion in 1414.[3] Henry VI. founded Eton [4] and King's College,[5] Cambridge, in 1441, and Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, founded All Souls' College, Oxford,[6] in 1438. For the endowment of Christchurch College, Oxford, and of the school which

[1] "In these monasteries (the Pope) nourishes a seminary of factious persons that oppose your supremacy," said one to the King, at a debate in the Council in 1535 (Lord Herbert, "The Life and Reign of King Henry VIII.," p. 185, ed. 1706, vol. ii. of "A Complete History of England").

[2] Rot. Parl., iv. 22.

[3] Monasticon, vi. 1, p. 29. For Sion, *cf.* Tanner, Notitia Monastica, Middlesex, xi. 1.

[4] Ibid., p. 1,433.

[5] J. Willis Clark, "The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge," vol. i. p. lix.

[6] Rashdall, "Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," vol. ii. part ii. p. 511.

he purposed to set up at Ipswich, Cardinal Wolsey obtained papal bulls by which he suppressed more than thirty houses of religion.[7] "By his untrue suggestion to the Pope," ran the nineteenth article of his impeachment before the House of Lords in 1529, "the Lord Cardinal shamefully slandered many good religious houses and good virtuous men dwelling in them. . . . And where by the authority of his bull he should not suppress any house that had more men of religion in number above the number of six or seven, he hath suppressed divers houses that had above the number; thereupon hath caused divers offices to be found by verdict, untruly, that the religious persons so suppressed had voluntarily forsaken their said houses, which was untrue; and so hath caused open perjury to be committed to the high displeasure of Almighty God." [8]

"Here," said Lord Herbert, "certainly began the taste that our King took of governing in chief the clergy, of which, therefore, as well as the dissolution of monasteries, it seems the first arguments and impressions were derived from the Cardinal." [9]

In 1531 Henry VIII. took the title of "Supreme Head of the Church of England," with the reluctant consent of Convocation,[10] and the title was confirmed by an Act of Parliament in 1534.[11] In the same year (1534) the Parliament gave to Henry the papal right of visitation, and he was empowered to issue commissions for visiting "monasteries, colleges, hospitals, priories, houses, and places religious exempt." [12] Thus the Gilbertines, who had successfully struggled against the jurisdiction of the

[7] Calendar of Letters and State Papers, vol. iv. p. 1, No. 652.

[8] Lord Herbert of Cherbury, "The Life and Reign of King Henry the Eighth," p. 127.

[9] Ibid., p. 85.

[10] Wilkins, "Concilia," vol. iii. p. 743; Canon Dixon, "History of the Church of England from the Abolition of the Roman Jurisdiction," vol. i. pp. 62–67.

[11] Statutes of the Realm, 26 Henry VIII., c. 1.

[12] Ibid., 25 Henry VIII., c. 21.

bishops in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, lay at the King's mercy.

In 1534 Parliament passed an Act of Succession which entailed the Crown on the children of Anne Boleyn. It provided that all the King's subjects should take an oath to observe the Act, but the form of the oath was not prescribed.[13] Accordingly Cromwell drew up an oath to be tendered to the religious throughout the country; the oath was far more exacting than that refused by Sir Thomas More and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester.[14] The religious were compelled to swear that they would ever hold the King head of the English Church, and that the Bishop of Rome had no greater authority or jurisdiction than any other bishops in England or elsewhere in their dioceses; that they would maintain the decrees and proclamations of the King, all the laws of England, and the Statutes of Parliament. In their prayers and litanies they were to commend to the prayers of the people, first the King as Supreme Head of the Church of England, secondly the Queen and her offspring, then the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other orders of the clergy.[15] The Order of Franciscan Observants, which had six houses in England, the monks of the London Charterhouse, and the Bridgettines of Sion alone offered any resistance: they were expelled from their houses, and many of them paid the penalty by death on the scaffold or from hardships in prison.[16] It is generally believed that Cromwell's agents travelled about the country, and everywhere received the oath which they tendered to the religious.[17] Evidence, however, is want-

[13] Statutes of the Realm, 25 Henry VIII., c. 22.

[14] Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. p. 211.

[15] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 489, quoted by Dixon, vol. i. p. 212 n.

[16] Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. pp. 263–277; and Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," ch. iv. pp. 45–74, ed. 1899.

[17] Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. p. 213.

ing.[18] Only 105 acknowledgments of royal supremacy are now known to be extant,[19] and no Gilbertine house is included among these. But on the testimony of Mr. Browne Willis, who must have had access to documents which have now disappeared, the Priors of Chicksand [20] and North Ormesby [21] subscribed to the King's Supremacy in 1534, the former on October 22nd.

In 1535 Henry appointed Thomas Cromwell Vicar-General of the Supreme Head, and empowered him, with such other commissioners as he should choose, to visit all churches and monasteries whenever he thought good.[22] Between January and June, 1535, certain commissioners surveyed the whole property of the Church,[23] and from their reports the Valor Ecclesiasticus was drawn up.[24]

A comparison of the Valor Ecclesiasticus with the Taxatio of Pope Nicholas IV. proves conclusively that the wealth of the monasteries before the Dissolution was a popular illusion. The belief was largely fostered by the libels of Simon Fish. He penned a violent attack on the Friars in his "Supplication of Beggars," involving in his sweeping condemnation "bishops, abbots, priors, deacons, archdeacons, suffragans, priests, monks, canons, friars, pardoners, and summoners." [25] He said that these had gotten into their hands more than a third part of the realm, but he based his conclusion, which is utterly refuted by the evidence of the Valor Ecclesiasticus, on a statement that there were 52,000 parishes in England.[26] "That is one plain lie to begin with," wrote Sir Thomas More in his "Supplication of Souls," in which he steadily

[18] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 76 n.
[19] 7th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii.
[20] Browne Willis, "The Mitred Abbeys," vol. ii. p. 2.
[21] Ibid., p. 121. [22] Wilkins, "Concilia," vol. iii. p. 784.
[23] "Valor Ecclesiasticus," vol. i., Introduction, p. v. But Fuller said that it took some years ("Church History," bk. v. p. 228, ed. 1655).
[24] Published by the Record Commission, ed. Hunter, 1810-1825.
[25] Simon Fish, "A Supplicacyon for the Beggers," p. 1, E.E.T.S.
[26] Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. p. 323.

confuted the falsehoods of Fish, one after another.[27] It is improbable, however, that many who read Fish troubled to read More's answer.

Since the fourteenth century the monasteries had grown steadily poorer. "The gross revenues of the Church and the monasteries, according to the Valor, is said to have been £320,000," wrote Canon Dixon. "The gross revenues, according to the Taxatio of Pope Nicholas, in 1291 was £220,000. Within this period the revenues of the whole kingdom had trebled itself. . . . If, therefore, the revenues of the Church and the religious Orders showed an absolute increase during this interval, it showed a relative decrease." [28] "We doubt," said another writer, "if they can be said to have doubled their nominal rentals. But the value of money had changed during the same time. A labourer now received sixpence a day at least, where he had before earned threepence. The quarter of corn had more than doubled in value." [29]

The Order of Sempringham was very poor. Its revenues had actually declined: in 1278 they were estimated at £3,000,[30] in 1535 they amounted only to £2,421 13s. 9d.[31] As the purchasing power of money was only about half as great as in the fourteenth century, extreme poverty prevailed. A few of the houses, among which were Sempringham and Chicksand,[32] had increased their nominal revenues between 1291 and 1535,[33] but even these were less than in the reign

[27] Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. p. 323 note. *Cf.* "The Supplycacyon of Soulys," p. 5, ed. 1529.

[28] Ibid., p. 249.

[29] *Home and Foreign Review*, January, 1864, "The Dissolution of the Monasteries."

[30] The Master of Sempringham paid £200 as the tenth for the Order. Cal. Rot. Pat., 6 Ed. I. m. 24; 47th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix.

[31] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. iv.

[32] "Taxatio"; "Valor Ecclesiasticus."

[33] The tenth due from Sempringham was £39 15s. 7d. (Cal. Rot. Pat., 11 Ed. III., m. 18); the tenth due from Chicksand was £18 16s. 0½d. (Ibid., m. 28).

To William Cartwright Esqr
This Prospect is humbly Inscrib'd by
Yr Oblig'd Servants:
Sam.l & Nath.l Buck.

CLATTERCOTE PR

THIS Church was a Gilbertane Priory, dedicated to S.t Leonard
Thomas Beauchamp Earl of Warwick at his diseases, by Will gave to
this House the Patronage of the Church of Rothley in Warwickshire
At the dissolution of Monasterys by King Henry 8.th it was valued at
34. li. 9. s. 2 d. Dugdale. This Estate has been the possession of y.e Cartwrights
above 100 years; and now belongs to William Cartwright Esq.r

S. & N. Buck delin.t et Sculp. 1729

1729.

[Facing p. 167.

of Edward III. Only four of the houses had revenues over £200 a year—Sempringham, S. Catherine's outside Lincoln, Chicksand, and Watton.[34]

The numbers of the religious in the Order were very greatly diminished. At the Dissolution there were only 143 canons and 139 nuns, besides fifteen lay-sisters.[35]

The internal evidence of the Valor is entirely favourable to the Order of Sempringham. The complex system of visitation appointed by S. Gilbert was still maintained, and the services due from each house had been commuted for money payments.[36] Clattercote Priory paid yearly—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
To the Supreme Visitor	1	3	4
To the Scrutator	0	3	4
To the Confessor	0	3	4
To the Chaplain of the Master ...	0	2	0

"according to the Statutes of our Order."[37] Most of the other houses paid a lump sum for the visitation. The Master received in all £64 13s. 4d.[38]

There was no need for the Visitors to bid the Gilbertines maintain scholars at Cambridge.[39] The sums paid yearly by each house to the Prior of S. Edmund's at Cambridge were set down in the Valor: Sempringham, Bullington,

[34] The revenues of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln were £270 1s. 3d., in clear income £202 5s. 0½d. (Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 968); the revenues of Watton were £453 7s. 8d., in clear income £360 16s. 10½d. (Ibid., p. 954).

[35] These numbers are taken from the Deeds of Surrender in Appendix ii. to the 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, from those in the Calendars of the State Papers, and from the Pensions List in the Calendar of State Papers, vol. xiv. (1), pp. 596–611. Nine "sisters" were pensioned at Watton, one who signed the Deed of Surrender at Chicksand. Five lay-sisters who were not pensioned were at S. Catherine's outside Lincoln in 1535. There is no record of any lay-brothers.

[36] "Valor Ecclesiasticus," Sempringham, vol. iv. p. 102; Alvingham, vol. iv. p. 58, &c.

[37] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 197.

[38] "Valor Ecclesiasticus," vol. v. p. 126.

[39] Wilkins, "Concilia," vol. iii. p. 790.

S. Catherine's outside Lincoln, and Chicksand, each paid 16s.; the little house of Mirmaud, at which were only the Prior and one canon, paid 4s. Probably the Gilbertine canons at Cambridge profited, like the rest of the religious students, by the revival of learning at the University.[40]

Shortly before the Dissolution there were many manuscripts at North Ormesby and at Haverholme, though but few printed books.[41]

The canons of Newstead-on-Ancholme had only £88 13s. 5d. as clear income, yet they still distributed £1 13s. 8d. in alms to the poor, for the souls of their founders, Henry II. and John, on the days of their deaths, and for Roger de Lacy a quartern of fine flour and a quarter of corn.[42]

The canons of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln paid yearly £21 13s. 4d. for the maintenance and education of orphans in the Hospital of the Holy Sepulchre at Lincoln, and for five lay-sisters to look after the orphans and the poor who came to the hospital.[43]

In October, 1535, the bishops were forbidden to visit any monastery or church during the general visitation by the commissioners appointed by Cromwell.[44] The commissioners began their work at the end of October. They received instructions containing eighty-six articles to be inquired of the religious,[45] and twenty-five injunctions to which they might add at their own discretion.[46] The articles consisted of a series of questions about the way in which the religious kept their rule. The injunctions were so severe that Canon Dixon has called them "a new Regula Henrici."[47] The religious were bound "to observe and fulfil, the statutes of this realm made or to be made

[40] Gasquet, "The Eve of the Reformation," pp. 41–43.

[41] MS. Add. 6413, ff. 5, 9^{v}, Brit. Mus. It is conjectured that the notes in this MS. were made by Leland.

[42] "Valor Ecclesiasticus," vol. iv. p. 72. [43] Ibid., p. 34.

[44] Wilkins, "Concilia," vol. iii. p. 797; Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. p. 306, note.

[45] Wilkins, "Concilia," vol. iii. p. 786. [46] Ibid., p. 789.

[47] Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. p. 377.

for the suppression and taking away of the usurped and pretended jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome within this realm"; and to "diligently instruct their juniors and youngers" in the same. They were absolved from all oaths and obedience to the Bishop of Rome. The strict observance of the regulations concerning their daily life was almost impossible. No monk or brother might "by any means "go forth of the precincts" of the monastery. One entrance guarded by a porter must suffice for each house. All women were utterly excluded from the bounds of a house for men save with the leave of the King and his Visitor. "Framed in the spirit of three centuries earlier," wrote Father Gasquet, "unworkable in practice and enforced by such agents, it is easy to understand, even were there no written evidence of the fact, that they were galling and unbearable to the helpless inmates of the monasteries."[48] Another injunction was intended to subvert monastic discipline. Any of the religious wishing to complain of their superior or of their brethren could appeal to Cromwell.

The four chief commissioners sent by Cromwell to visit the monasteries were Doctor Richard Layton, Thomas Legh, Doctor John London, and John Ap Rice. "The inquisitors," wrote Fuller, "were men who well understood the message they were sent on, and would not come back without a satisfactory answer to him who sent them, knowing themselves to be no losers thereby."[49] Most modern writers are convinced that these men were themselves the vilest wretches, and in consequence their testimony is much discredited.[50] Their letters showed plainly that they gloated over the crimes which they professed to discover, and that they treated the religious with great insolence. They

[48] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 79.

[49] Fuller, "Church History," p. 314.

[50] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," chap. ix. pp. 158–175; Gairdner, "Calendar X.," Preface, p. xliii.; Dixon, "History of the Church of England," vol. i. p. 357.

frankly admitted the taking of bribes, and demanded them when they were not offered to them.

There is but little evidence of the result of the visitation of the Gilbertine houses. On December 22, 1535, Dr. Layton wrote from Lichfield to Cromwell that he had been at Chicksand Priory on his way north.[51] "Wheras they wolde not in any wisse have admittede me as vysiter, I wolde not be so answerede, but visitede them." He professed to have discovered that two of the eighteen nuns were guilty of incontinence.[52] "The two prioresses wolde not confesse this, nother the parties, nor none of the nunnes, but one old beldame; and whan I objectede agayns the saide prioresses, that if they cowlde not shewe me a cause resonable of that ther conseilement, I must nedes and wolde punnisshe them for ther manifeste perjurie, ther answer was that they were bownde by ther religion never to confesses the secrette fawttes done emongiste them, but onely to ther owne visiture of ther religion, and to that they were sworne evere one of them at ther firste admission." As usual, when Layton failed to discover the evil of which he was in search, he said that the religious were "confederate" to conceal their crimes; the steadfast resistance of the nuns was very disconcerting to him.

In a letter to Cromwell from Ely on November 1st, Dr. Legh wrote: "Ther ys a pryory namyd Byggyn in the towne of Fordham, wher as ys but the prior and his moncke, and the moncke is in extreme age and at dethes door, and my lord of Northehumberland ys fownder ther, of whom I suppose ye maye very easely opteyne his title and interest. Yt is a propre howse, and yt stand commodyously and pleasauntly, and yt may spend xxx li. by the yere in temporall landes, besyde spyrytualtyes, whyche ys a benefyce of xvi li. by the yere. Also I desyre you to

[51] "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 91, Camden Society.

[52] "One of them impregnavit supprior domus, an other a servyng man."

send me worde, what shall be doon with thes relygyous persons whiche knelying on ther knees, howldyng up ther handes, instantly with humble petycyon desyre of God, the Kyng, and you, to be dymyssyd from ther relygyon, sayying they lyve in yt contrary to Goddys lawe and ther conscyens, trusting that the Kyng of hys gracyous goodnes and you wyll set them at lybertye owte of this bondage, which they ar not able lenger to endure (as they saye), but shuld fall into dysperatyon or elles ronne awaye, with many other lamentable petycyons whiche war now to long to wryte, but yt war a dede of charyte that they myght lyve in that kynd of lyvyng whiche myght be moste to the glorye of God, the quyetnes of ther conscyens, and most to the commonwelthe, who so ever hathe informyd you to the contrary, for your harte wold lamente to here them as I doo, as thys berer your servaunte can shewe you."[53] The evidence of a certain Edward Bestney tallied with that of Dr. Legh about Fordham, but, on the face of it, it was not very reliable. On November 4th he wrote to Cromwell: "There is a little religious house named Bigyn in the town of Fordham, with a Prior and one canon, and an income of twenty-six pounds yearly. One of them is old and like to die. For their naughty observance of their foundation and their enormities they are likely to fall into the King's hands, and will be under Cromwell's administration as general visitor. And whereas you have oftentimes comforted me, not only by your words but also by your letters, willing me to spy out, and you will help me, this house and the land thereunto pertaining adjoineth to my land so commodiously and pleasantly that if you will help me to the farm thereof I shall esteem it more than a thing more profitable."[54] Three years later, when Dr.

[53] "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 82, Camden Society.

[54] Calendar, vol. ix., No. 761. "Was it after a full and judicial inquiry," wrote Dr. Gairdner, "that the visitors found some minor form of impurity established against both the dwellers in this house, one of them by report being an old man on the verge of the grave?" (Calendar, vol. x., Preface, p. xliv.).

Legh came to take the surrender of the house, three canons signed with the Prior. He said then, "There is not a poorer house in all England."[55]

On September 27, 1535, John Tregonwell wrote to Cromwell from Studley Priory about Clattercote, where he had been a few days before: "a Howse of th' Order of the Gilbertynes where I fownde iij Chanons besyde the Pryor. That Howse is olde, fowle, and fylthe. Whethere there levyng be accordyng I cannot tell, for they desyryd me that I wolde not vyset them by cause (as they sayd) that yow hadde gevyne (by your commission) full autoryte to the Pryor of Semperyngham to vyset all there Order, so that no man but he shulde medle with that Order, and by cause I wolde not mittere falcem in messem alienam with owt your pleasure to me knowen, I departed thens negotio infecto."[56]

In the Comperta, besides two canons of Fordham, one canon of Mattersey, who sought release from religion, two nuns of Shouldham and three canons of that house were accused of incontinence.[57] The trustworthiness of these documents known as Comperta is, however, open to grave doubt. It is very singular that out of two hundred and fifty monks and nuns who are accused of incontinence, one-third at least can be identified as having afterwards received pensions.[58] The Comperta cannot have formed part of the mysterious Black Book, which was said to have been laid before Parliament in 1536, and to have been the evidence on which the smaller monasteries were suppressed.[59] They contain serious charges against many of the greater monasteries, whereas the preamble of the Act for the suppression of the monasteries in which there were less than twelve persons, expressly stated that "in divers

[55] *Cf.* p. 193.
[56] Ellis, "Original Letters," 3rd Series, vol. iii. p. 38.
[57] Calendar, vol. x., No. 364.
[58] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 123.
[59] *Et seq.*, Wakeman, "History of the Church of England," p. 250.

and solemn great monasteries, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed." It is also suspicious that, although the religious of Garendon and Gracedieu were reported by the commission of country gentlemen of Leicester to be of good and virtuous conversation, they are branded as notorious evil livers in the Comperta.[60] "Clearly, if genuine," wrote Mr. Wakeman, "they do not represent confessions of sin made at the time, but an official record drawn up afterwards. . . . Those who have fully grasped the methods of government pursued by Henry VIII. and Cromwell will be disposed to think it quite as likely that the Comperta were compiled to justify the suppression as that the suppression was carried out on the evidence of the Comperta."[61]

Nothing was alleged by Legh and Layton against the Gilbertines in Yorkshire. It is possible that, as their visitation of the northern monasteries occupied them less than two months, and they could hardly have examined four out of ten houses,[62] Dr. Layton did not court another rebuff from the Gilbertines. The dispatch of the visitors was doubtless due to Cromwell's desire that their report should be finished in February, 1536, when Parliament reassembled.[63]

Early in March a Bill was introduced for the suppression of the smaller monasteries. According to the preamble of the Act, Henry in person declared in Parliament that he had knowledge of the evil lives of those in the smaller monasteries, "as well by the compertes of his late visitation as by sundry credible informations." "Whereupon the said Lords and Commons by a great deliberation finally be resolved that it is and shall be much more to the pleasure of Almighty God" that the property of these religious "should be converted to better uses, and the unthrifty persons so spending the same be compelled to reform their

[60] Calendar, vol. x., Preface, p. xlvi. [61] *Cf.* note 59.
[62] Calendar, vol. x., Preface, p. xlv. note.
[63] Ibid., Preface, p. xlv.

lives." The Lords and Commons prayed the King to take all the property of monasteries having an income under £200 a year.[64] Hall wrote in his chronicle, "And in this tyme was geuen vnto the kyng by the consent of the great and fatte abbottes all religious houses that were of the value of ccc marke and vnder, in hope that their great monasteries should haue continued still: But euen at that tyme one sayd in the Parliament house that these were as thornes, but the great abbottes were putrified olde okes, and they must nedes folowe: and so will other do in Christendome quoth doctor Stokesley, bishop of London, or many yeres be passed."[65]

Though only four of the Gilbertine houses had revenues over £200 a year, they did not fall under the Act. The exemption of the Order was probably due to the influence of Robert Holgate, Master of Sempringham, with Cromwell.

Robert Holgate was a canon of the Order, and was perhaps educated at S. Edmund's Hall at Cambridge.[66] He was a preacher of the University in 1524.[67] He became Prior of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln. Some dispute about the vicarage of Cadney caused him to go to London, and he was appointed chaplain to Cromwell. In or before 1534 he became Master of Sempringham,[68] probably by the King's will, and not by the election of the whole Order. He was Prior of Watton before July, 1536, when John Hilsey, Bishop of Rochester, wrote to Cromwell, asking him to let the Master of the Gilbertines, the Prior of Watton, "enjoy his office with all in commendam": he doubted not that Robert Holgate would do the King good service.[69] On August 10th John Hilsey wrote again

[64] 27 Henry VIII. c. 28.

[65] Hall, "The Union of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre and Yorke," p. 818, ed. 1809.

[66] "Dictionary of National Biography." [67] Ibid.

[68] MS. Laud, 642, f. 118. Robert was Master of the Order on June 10, 1534. [69] Calendar, vol. xi. 188.

to Cromwell, reminding him of the Master of the Gilbertines "towards Llandaff."[70] Robert Holgate was consecrated Bishop of Llandaff on March 29, 1537. He became a member of the Council of the North, succeeding Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, as President in July, 1538.[71]

It is probable, from the evidence as to his character, that he obtained a respite for the Order of Sempringham on account of the revenues which he drew from it.

On April 24th the officials of the Court of Augmentations, which had been created by Parliament to deal with the property of the religious, were appointed; and instructions were issued to bodies of commissioners to make a new survey of the houses in the different counties.[72] The commission consisted of "one auditor, one particular receiver, a clerk of the register of the last visitation, and three other discreet persons to be named by the King in every county." If there were any houses of the Gilbertine Order in the county, the commissioners were instructed "to order the governors to appear before the Chancellor of the Augmentations at Westminster to learn the King's pleasure."[73] Unfortunately very few of the reports are known to be extant, for in these the testimony of the country gentlemen was very favourable, on the whole, to the morals of the religious. In the county of Norfolk, Sir Roger Townshend and Sir William Paston, Knight, Richard Southwell, Esquire, and Thomas Mildmay, reported that "the Monastery of Shuldeham and the Priory of Marmonde ben of thordre of Gylberdynes, who hath in lykewyse commandement by privy seale to appere before you opon the sight of the same."[74] In Wiltshire,

[70] Calendar, vol. xi. 260. [71] Ibid., vol. xiii. (1), Nos. 1268, 1269.
[72] Ibid., vol. x. 721. [73] Ibid., vol. x. 721 (23).
[74] *Dublin Review*, April, 1894. "Overlooked Testimonies to the Character of the English Monasteries on the Eve of their Suppression," pp. 261 and 265. Mirmaud was included in the commission for Norfolk. The parish of Upwell, in which the Priory was situated, was partly in Norfolk, partly in Cambridgeshire, but the Priory was in Cambridgeshire.

Henry Longe, Knight, Richard Poulet, Esquire, John Pye, and William Berners reported that the "Governor (of Poulton) appered before the seid commyssioners the 28 daye of June, to whom they gave injunction to appere before the Chauncellor and Councell of the Court of Augmentacions of the reveneux of the King's Crowne the 6th daye of Julye the next followynge upon payne of £150."[75] Of the Priory of Saint Margaret's by Marlborough, they said, "the Governor is with the Master of thordre at London."[76]

However, the King's pleasure was that the Order of Sempringham should continue for a space.[77] In Cromwell's private Accounts, he received on November 19, 1537, £40 from Robert Holgate, now Bishop of Llandaff, 40s. from him as Prior of Watton, 40s. each from the Priors of Sempringham and S. Catherine's, Lincoln, 2 marks from the Prior of Bullington, and 20s. from the Prior of Haverholme.[78] It is possible that the Priors hoped to save their houses by fees to Cromwell.[79]

However, Rauf Morice, one of Cranmer's zealous servants, calculated on the fall of the Gilbertine houses in 1536. "Lest I should not seem like one that doth nothing esteem the favour of so noble a man," he wrote to Cromwell, "I continue to crave furtherance of my suit for the farm of the cell in Hychyn named Byggyngs. I trust your Lordship will consider my necessity, having wife and children 'yearly growing unto a more number,' and no certainty of living. Besides, the example of your goodness to divers travailing with their pen in this happy world of godly reformation, I am encouraged by the King's

[75] *Dublin Review*, April, 1894, pp. 272, 273, 274.

[76] Ibid., p. 274.

[77] There is no record known of the appearance of the Gilbertine Priors before the Court of Augmentations.

[78] Calendar, vol. xiv. 2, No. 782, p. 320.

[79] For an account of the presents sent to Cromwell from the religious, *cf.* Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," pp. 148–150.

liberality. The thing for which I sue is but £14 a year in the King's books, and most part is in ruinous tenements, so that few make suit for it. My petition is that the King, in consideration of my services in his Highness' affairs committed unto my Lord my master (Cranmer) these eight years past, to grant me a lease of the said cell 20 nobles under the rent valued. Please declare your pleasure in the premises to my friend Mr. Ames, your servant; I am busy in writing about the ordinance of his Highness' colleges and cannot do my duty in person."[80]

The people of the northern counties disapproved strongly of the suppression of the monasteries. "Being at that tyme very ignorant and rude," wrote Hall, the Protestant chronicler, "knowing not what true religion meant, but altogether noseled in supersticion and popery, and also by the meanes of certayne Abbottes and ignorant priestes not a little stirred and provoked for the suppression of certain Monasteries, and for the extirpacion and abholishyng of the byshoppe of Rome . . .; and therefore sodainly they spred abrode and raysed great and shamefull slaunders only to move the people to sedicion and rebellion, and to kyndle in the people hateful and malicious myndes against the kynges Maiestie and the Magestrates of the realme, saiying let vs fully bend our selues to the mayntenaunce of religion and rather then to suffre it thus to decay euen to dye in the felde."[81]

In Lincolnshire about thirty-seven monasteries were dissolved before Michaelmas, 1537, and John Freeman, the royal receiver, gathered in £8,756 11s. 9¾d., of which he only paid away a fourth in the process.[82] The number of homeless monks and nuns, the destruction of monastic churches and buildings, and the sales of the treasures, created great excitement among the "rude commons" of a shire, which, as Henry VIII. told them, was "one

[80] Calendar, vol. xi. 1480; *cf.* also 1479. [81] Hall, p. 820.
[82] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 199. Exch. Augt. Office Mens. Accts., 27–27 Hen. VIII., No. 166.

of the most brute and beastly of the whole realme, and of the least experience."[83] Reports were spread abroad that many of the parish churches were also in danger, and that their treasures would be taken by the King.[84]

The people were much irritated at the same time by the Statute of Uses, which put a check on the disposition of property,[85] and by the enforced payment of a subsidy of two and a half per cent. on all incomes over twenty pounds a year, granted by Parliament in 1534.[86]

The rebellion in Lincolnshire[87] broke out at Louth, on Sunday, October 1st. It spread rapidly over the county. The commons forced the gentlemen to swear an oath to be true to them. At the muster at Horncastle the gentlemen set down the demands of the commons, which were sent to the King at Windsor. There was no real leader of the commons, and no organisation among them. Before the Duke of Suffolk arrived at Stamford on October 11th, "with a goodly and warlike army,"[88] the greater part of the sixty thousand men who were said to have assembled at Lincoln, had returned to their homes. On the following day the King's herald rode into Lincoln with his contemptuous reply to the rebels. The gentlemen told the people that they had misunderstood the King's intentions, and that resistance must cease. They abandoned them, and rode off to join the Duke of Suffolk. The commons, "eche mistrusting other who should be noted to be the greatest

[83] Hall, p. 821.

[84] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 70, v. For the interest taken by the people in the parish churches and their treasures, *cf.* Gasquet, "The Eve of the Reformation," chapter x. on "Parish Life in Catholic England"; and also "Parish Life in England before the Great Pillage," by Dr. Jessopp, *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1898.

[85] 27 Hen. VIII. c. 10.

[86] Hall, p. 821.

[87] For the rebellion in Lincolnshire, *cf.* Calendar, vols. xi. and xii. *Cf.* also Froude, "History of England," vol. ii. chap. xiii. pp. 499–532 (ed. 1893), and Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," chap. xi. pp. 198–219.

[88] Hall, p. 820.

medeler, euen very sodenly thei began to shrink, and out of hand they were all deuided, and euery man at home in his awne house in peace."[89]

Father Gasquet has shown from close examination of the evidence that the monks did not foment the disturbance, and they took no active part in it,[90] as Mr. Froude has stated.[91] "They must doubtless have given their best wishes to a movement which was initiated in their defence, but beyond this and the fact that they had given food, and perhaps money, to the mob, and that some were violently compelled to go with it, there is nothing that can be construed into a proof of complicity."[92]

William Griffith, Prior of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln, was said by Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, to have been removed "for setting forward the late commotion in Lincolnshire, as well as misspending the goods of his house."[93] He entered the priory by force and expelled the brother put in his place, and was Prior when the house was surrendered in 1538. There is no other evidence against any of the Gilbertines. The men of Cockerington and Alvingham marched to Lincoln,[94] but whether the Prior of Alvingham assisted them in any way or not, is unknown.

"But se, euen within six dayes followyng, was the king truly certefied that there was a new insurreccion made by the northren men, which had assembled them selfes into a houge and great army of warlike men and wel appoincted both with capitaines, horse, harneis and artillary to the

[89] Hall, p. 821.

[90] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," pp. 215–219.

[91] Froude, "History of England," vol. ii. pp. 516, 517 and 532.

[92] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 215.

[93] Calendar, vol. xiii. (1), No. 397. Had William Griffith taken any prominent part in the rebellion, he would doubtless, like the Abbots of Barlings and Kirkstead and other religious, have paid for it with his life.

[94] Calendar, vol. xi. No. 975. William Holton, Vicar of Cockerington, was executed at Lincoln, March 6, 1537 (Calendar, vol. xii. (1) 581).

nombre of fourtie thousand men, which had incamped themselves in Yorkshire: And these men had eche of theim to other bound them selfes by their othe to be faithfull and obedient to his capitaine: they also declared by their proclamacions solemply made, that this their insurreccion, should extend no farther but only to the maintenaunce and defence of the faith of Christe and deliueraunce of holy Churche sore decaied and oppressed, and also for the furtheraunce aswel of priuate as public matters in the realme touchyng the wealth of al the kynges poore subjectes."[95] On October 13th beacons were blazing and church bells ringing all over Yorkshire. The leader of the people was Robert Aske, a gentleman of good family. In Yorkshire, the archdeaconry of Richmond, and the bishopric of Durham, forty-seven houses of men and twenty-three convents of women had been dissolved.[96] "The commons were gnawn in their conscience with spreading of heretics, suppression of houses of religion and other matters touching the commonwealth," wrote Aske, on October 19th, to the lords in Pomfret Castle.[97] He blamed the lords temporal in that they "had not declared to the king the poverty of his realm, by which danger might have been avoided, as in the northern parts much of the relief of the commons was by succour of abbeys." When he was examined in the Tower on April 11, 1537, he admitted that false reports were "one of the great causes" of the insurrection, "but the suppression of abbeys was the greatest cause of the said insurrection which the hearts of the commons most grudged at. He thought that only the suppression of the abbeys and dimission of preachers had

[95] Hall, p. 822. For the Pilgrimage of Grace, *cf.* Calendar, vols. xi., xii. (1); Froude, "History of England," vol. ii. chap. xiii. pp. 533–598, vol. iii. chap. xiv. pp. 6–19, 22–40; Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," chaps. xii. and xiii. pp. 220–264.

[96] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 224; Calendar, vol. xii. (1), 233.

[97] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 6.

caused an insurrection though the said bruits had not been spoken of at all." [98]

The commons flocked to join Aske. Before the end of October almost all the great families had come in, and in the north only Skipton Castle held out for the King. The ejected monks were reinstated. Over twenty thousand well-armed men marched from Pomfret Castle to the Don to oppose the Duke of Norfolk, who was not far from Doncaster on October 25th. After much parleying, Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Ralph Ellerker, escorted by the Duke of Norfolk, set out to carry the demands of the rebels to the King. Henry waited over a fortnight before he sent an answer, that his musters might have time to come up. At the urgent intreaty of the Duke of Norfolk, Henry empowered him to grant a full pardon to the rebels and to promise them a Parliament at York. Aske, Lord Darcy, and other leaders made their submission to the Duke of Norfolk at Doncaster in December, and threw off their badges of the five wounds of Christ, in the belief that other vague promises from the Duke insured the accomplishment of their object. The commons dispersed to their homes.

Henry summoned Aske to London to speak with him about the rising. Aske returned convinced of the King's good faith. Henry, however, was steadily collecting troops, and garrisoning the castles of the north. Aske found fresh agitation in Yorkshire, and wrote immediately to the King, asking him to redeem his promises. In January insurrections broke out in Yorkshire, under Sir Francis Bigod, a yeoman named Hallom, and others. Aske, Lord Darcy, and Sir Robert Constable strove in vain to restrain the commons, whose cry was, "Wherefore now is time to arise, or else never, and go proceed with our pilgrimage for grace, or else we shall be all undone. Wherefore, forward! forward! now forward in pain of death, forward now or else never! And ye shall have captains just and true, and

[98] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 901.

be not stayed by no gentlemen in no wise."[99] The rising soon collapsed, and the leaders fell into the King's hands. He seized the opportunity of breaking the Articles at Doncaster, and executed the leaders of the first rising also.

The Gilbertines in Yorkshire were charged with helping the commons in the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Robert Holgate, Prior of Watton, fled at once "to the Lord Cromwell, being one of his promotion, and left three or four score brethren and sisters of the same house without forty shillings to succour them."[100] "While he was here," testified John Hallom before the Mayor and the King's Commissioners at Kingston-upon-Hull on January 24, 1537, "he was good to no man, and took of this examinate twenty marks in money where he should have been paid in corn when God should send it; and he gives many unkind words to his tenants in his court, more like a judge than a religious man."[101] In the examination of Dan. Harry Gill, Sub-prior of Watton,[102] a day or two after that of Hallom, he told how "Hallom, being greatly incensed against the Prior for putting him beside a farmhold, came at the time of the first insurrection with a number of his soldiers, and with bills and clubs,[103] into the infirmary of Watton, where the brethren were bound to dinner; and there in the presence of the Priors of Ellerton and of S. Andrew's, York, charged the brethren to elect a new Prior. They said it was against their statutes, their Prior being alive and not lawfully removed. He then said, if they did not he would spoil their house, and he would nominate one himself, adding, 'Methinks this man,' pointing to the Prior of Ellerton, 'is meet to be your Prior.' Then for fear of spoiling their goods they went together, and nominated James Lowrance,[104] the Prior of Ellerton, to be their Prior,

[99] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 138. [100] Ibid., No. 6.

[101] Ibid., No. 201, p. 92. [102] Ibid., No. 201, pp. 98–100.

[103] Ibid., No. 201, p. 101: Examination of Thomas Lather, cellarer and granator.

[104] Ibid., No. 201, p. 102: Examination of Richard Wilkinson, cellarer of the kitchen.

but he would never take it upon him, nor did they receive him for such indeed, but wanted him to bear the name only for fear of the commons." Hearing of the disturbance, Aske hastened to Watton; he pacified the commons and deputed the sub-prior to manage the house in the Prior's absence.[105]

Shortly before the second insurrection, in January, 1537, Sir Francis Bigod and Hallom were at Watton. "Bigod kindled Hallom much more to move the brethren to a new election, saying they might lawfully do so. Thereupon they made a writ of nomination of the Prior of Ellerton as their Prior, and left it with one Wade dwelling by; so that if a new insurrection should happen, it might be sealed with their common seal and subscribed by a notary, and be shown to the commons for the saving of the house goods." The draft of the document was in Bigod's hand. "The Sub-prior and Convent of Our Lady of Watton, Yorkshire, complain of the conduct of the late Prior of S. Catherine's near Lincoln, who has taken upon himself to be their Prior and to be Master of their religion. Considering the great danger they have lately incurred by the commons of the country, who have expelled the Prior of S. Catherine's from Watton, and will not suffer them to receive their rents, nor will their tenants pay till they have a new Prior, have elected A. B. C. Prior, hoping that he will please God, the King, and the brethren of the religion, and have set the convent seal to this instrument in the chapter house, the day and yere aboufe written."[106] Clearly from the evidence the Gilbertines of Watton were blameless in the matter, though William Horsekey, a yeoman of Watton, maliciously said that "Upon his conscience he thinks there is never a good one of all the canons of that house, and that they all bear a grudge to their Prior, and would fain have a new one."[107]

Apparently the slight assistance given to the rebels was

[105] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 6, *cf.* vol. xi. (2), No. 849, p. 382.
[106] Ibid., No. 65. [107] Ibid., No. 201, p. 87.

under compulsion. Harry Gill, the Sub-prior of Watton, said that he had received a bill from certain captains in the first insurrection to send them money under penalty.[108] He delivered ten pounds to pay "to them that they thought might do most for the safeguard of our house." On October 19th, Sir Thomas Percy demanded two geldings from the Sub-prior. "I trust you will not say me nay. I am certified you have a great trotting bay gelding, which I look for as one." One gelding only was sent to Sir Thomas Percy. Hallom sent a message to the Sub-prior that he must keep the "ambling gelding" for him; "if he will not lend me him I will take him." He took him. William Curser borrowed a gelding, which he still kept. The Prior of Malton borrowed a horse and cart, which he still had in his possession. The Sub-prior knew not "what money our soldiers spend us," but Dan Thomas Lather could tell, for he paid them all. No victuals were sent that he knew. Thomas Lather, cellarer and granator, and Richard Wilkinson, cellarer of the kitchen, were also summoned to Kingston-upon-Hull to give evidence. Thomas Lather[109] told how William Curser took their last gelding. "We were so afraid of being spoiled," he pleaded, "especially because our Master was gone, who was always named a traitor among the commons. As to messages and letters, we sent divers times for the safety of our goods. For we went once to Sir Thomas Percy to deliver the horse for his commandment, and afterwards to Baynton to desire Bigot to save our goods from the commons, who were at a place called Hessleskew on their way, for the night before they were at Howald, and there destroyed both our hay and corn. Mr. Aske and Mr. Rudston, captains, and John Hallom stirred all with us, and made us find two men with horse and harness and money also, as other had: there was no remedy. We were afterwards commanded to put other

[108] *Et seq.*, Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 201, pp. 98–100.
[109] Ibid., p. 100.

four to them and send them hither to Hull with harness and a week's wages, and we were compelled to buy or borrow harness for them." Richard Wilkinson[110] said that he had given bread and cheese to two of the men who had gone to join Aske, and the wages which he paid to them were sixpence a day. He was "sore sick" at the time of the first insurrection, so he could not tell much about it.

The letters of Aske bore out the statement of the Sub-prior that they had unwillingly sent him the spice plate at Watton. On November 10th Aske wrote to the Prior of Ellerton, who had been forced to assume the name of Prior of Watton. Evidently Aske had met with one refusal. "He marvelled that the Prior would send him 'such a letter' without a name subscribed. He asked who sent it, for he would be glad to know his friends and would remember them, and the house of Watton too, from which he had never yet had 'a penny in this high business.' He bade them send him the spice plate at Watton, which was held in pledge for the Earl of Northumberland. 'If I complained to the lords,' he added, 'the house would be spoiled.' 'It is pity to do anything for that house that so unkindly orders me, who have done more for religion than they can ever deserve.'"[111] On November 14th Aske thanked the Sub-prior and Brethren and the Prioress and Convent of Watton for the spice plate received from the Prior of Ellerton. He said that he never intended to be "a suppressor, but a maintainer, of religious," and therefore begged them to be "merry."[112]

When Harry Gill was questioned about "what communication he had touching the Supreme Head," he replied that he had no learning to discuss that matter, but every one said "if that were not laid down it would not be well." "He never made letter or knew one made but one that Dr. Swinburne made, and another that a young man of our habit made, called Thomas Asheton, 'comparing Peter

[110] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 201, p. 102.
[111] Ibid., vol. xi. No. 1039. [112] Ibid., No. 1069.

and his Apostles.' And they were both one as touching the Supreme Head. 'The one I read that the young man made but not the other.' "[113]

William Horsekey, yeoman of Watton, said that the Sub-prior, the confessor of the nuns, the vicar of Watton, and one Anthony, canons of Watton, were "great setters forth of sedition, for he heard them say several times since Christmas that it would never be well as long as the King was the supreme head of the Church, and that it would not be reformed unless the people set forward again with a new insurrection."[114]

William Todde, Prior of Malton, was arrested and sent to London. On April 24, 1537, he was examined in the Tower before Layton, Tregonwell, and Legh.[115] The clerk who took down his deposition wrote: "On Tuesday before Bigod's commotion, as examinat and his brethren were at dinner, came Sir Francis Bigod, saying that he must to York on a matter between the Treasurer and the old Prior of Guysborough. After dinner he turned to the fire and warmed himself, and asked examinat if he had seen the pardon. He answered, 'No.' Then he drew a copy of the pardon (as he called it) from his purse, and showed examinat a piece of it which he said 'would set the Scots in our tops.' It was that 'this commotion encouraged our ancient enemies the Scots,' which he thought would make them very angry. Examinat answered 'it should make but little matter of their anger.' He asked examinat if he had a copy of the articles given at Doncaster. Examinat said 'Yea,' and showed them to him, and he gave a servant of examinat's two groats to make a copy of them and send it after him. Had no other communication with him, either concerning the pardon or a new commotion.

"The Monday following came to Malton one of Bigod's servants, and ordered examinat on pain of death to send his servants to the muster on the morrow. Examinat

[113] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 201, p. 99.
[114] Ibid., No. 201, p. 87. [115] Ibid., No. 1023.

begged favour, for he had over many enemies already, and prayed him to make him no more. Sent no servants nor any manner of aid, but stayed as far as he could the country about him.

"Touching the first insurrection, he did nothing therein, but for fear of his life sent to them a servant, whom he afterwards put out of his service for railing the King's herald Lancaster. Also, under compulsion, he sent them a cart and two men without harness to drive it." According to the testimony of William Stapleton, "Sir Robert,[116] Friar of S. Robert's, of Knaresborough, had a horse of the Prior of Malton, for he had tired his own."

"About fourteen or sixteen years ago, at Rostendale, Westmoreland, examinat saw in one Geoffrey Lancaster's hands, a roll of parchment of half a yard in length and half a quarter of a yard broad or thereabouts, 'wherein was painted a moon growing, with a number of years growing as the moon did, and where the moon was at the full there was a cardinal painted, and beneath him the moon waned and ij monks painted a rowe, one under another headless, to a certain number, and in the midst of that roll was a strike made as an overthwarde partition, and under that line in the nether part of the roll, a child painted, with axes and butchers' knives and instruments about him.' This thing he has divers times showed both Bigod and others, and also a book he has in print called 'Metodius,' which Sir Ralph Yvers gave him, and which lies open in his chamber for all to read. But he never undertook to interpret any part of the said booke, and never spake concerning the King, either to Bigod or any other." [117]

Unfortunately for the Prior of Malton, Sir Francis Bigod contradicted the latter part of his testimony. "He showed Bigod, as Bigod deposes, of a prophecy which he said he never understood till then, and now he knew that it was this year it spoke of. Bigod then remembered that the said quondam Prior of Malton had before told him of

[116] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 392. [117] *Cf.* note 115.

a prophecy that the King should be fain to fly out of his realm, and ere he came in again would be glad to part with two parts of his land, so that he might sit in peace with the third. Bigod also says that the said prior of Malton showed him of another prophecy that the Church should abide woe for three years, and then reflourish as well as ever; and of another prophecy concerning the Cardinal." [118] There is no evidence about the fates of the Priors of Malton and Ellerton, the Sub-prior and the cellarer of Watton. Their names are not among those who surrendered their houses to the King in 1538 and 1539, nor in the pension lists. On the other hand, it is improbable that they were hanged according to Henry's command to the Duke of Norfolk in 1537, to "cause all the monks and canons that be in any wise faulty to be tied up without further delay or ceremony, to the terrible example of others." [119] Had they perished thus, their houses would have been forfeit to the King, by the strangely illegal interpretation of the Statute of Treason.

The progress of the Dissolution was stayed for a year after the Pilgrimage of Grace. The royal officials were occupied with ejecting the monks who had been reinstated by the commons, and in taking possession of the remaining houses which came under the Act of 1536. Henry dissolved several of the greater houses by attainder. Evidence, convincing the King and his servants, of the complicity of some of the northern abbots, convicted them of high treason, and by a new interpretation of the Statute of Treason their houses were forfeit to the Crown.[120]

[118] Calendar, vol. xii. (1), No. 1087.

[119] State Papers, vol. i. p. 540.

[120] Even Burnet considered Henry's action in this matter unjustifiable. "How justly soever these abbots were attainted, the seizing on their abbey lands, pursuant to those attainders, was thought a great stretch of law, since the offence of an ecclesiastical incumbent is a personal thing, and cannot prejudice the church; no more than a secular man, being in office, does by being attainted bring any diminution of the rights of the office on his successors" ("History of the Reformation," vol. i. p. 382, Clarendon Press).

From the time when the Dissolution of the smaller monasteries began, it was generally believed that the King and his evil counsellors would destroy all the abbeys and priories in England. Fearing that they would be left destitute, some of the religious "spoiled" their houses, pledged their plate, and let out their lands on new leases.[121] "They are in a customed sort all of spoil and bribery," wrote John Freeman to Cromwell, on October 3, 1538, after spoiling nine Gilbertine houses, "as well the great houses as small, of all the religious houses in England; for they leave neither demesnes unlet nor honest stuff in their houses, but also minisheth the greater part of their stock and store. Therefore they would be taken betime.[122]

In a letter to Cromwell on July 3, 1537, Sir Edmund Tame wrote: "There is in these parts a little religious house called Poulton, of S. Gilbert's Order, a cell to the house of Sempringham, and "as it is thought in these parts, by waste that they do, they think not to continue." He asked Cromwell for letters in his favour to the Master of Sempringham, for the farm of Poulton.[123]

The King desired to send round his host of spoilers to gather in the treasures for himself. Accordingly his commissioners laboured to convince the religious that the rumours were false.[124] "'His Majesty intendeth not in any wise to trouble you or to devise for the suppression of any house that standeth, except they shall either desire of themselves with one whole consent to resign and forsake the same or else misuse themselves contrary to their allegiance.' In this last case, concluded Cromwell, they shall lose 'more than their houses and possessions, that is, the loss also of their lives.' Wherefore take care of your houses and beware of spoiling them like some have done 'who imagined they were going to be dissolved.'"[125]

[121] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," pp. 332–336.
[122] Calendar, vol. xiii. (2), No. 528.
[123] Ibid, vol. xii. (2), No. 202.
[124] Ibid., vol. xiii. (1), No. 102.
[125] MS. Cotton, Cleopatra E. iv. f. 86, quoted by Gasquet, p. 334.

Nevertheless, at the end of 1539 only the Abbey of Westminster and one or two larger houses in the country remained.[126] The monasteries surrendered to the King, or fell to him in some other way, in 1538 and 1539. The royal agents were ordered to take "the consent of the head and convent by way of their fair surrender under their convent seal to the same. If they shall willingly consent and agree, the said commissioners shall appoint unto the said head and every of their convent pensions for term of their lives, and also give unto them by way of reward such sums of money for the change of their apparel, and likewise such portions of the household stuff" as they think proper. "And if they shall find any of the said heads and convents, so appointed to be dissolved, so wilful and obstinate that they will in no wise submit themselves to the King's Majesty in manner and form aforesaid; in that case the said commissioners shall take possession of the house and lands, the jewels, plate, cattle, stuff, and all other things belonging to them to the King's Majesty's use by force of the last Act made for the alteration of all spiritual tenures at his Majesty's pleasure." And in that case shall cause the brothers and sisters "to change their religious dress and give them money for the purpose, but they shall neither give pensions nor any part of their household goods to such obstinate and wilful persons, till they shall know further of the King's pleasure. And if they shall find any of them so indurate that they will not yield thereunto according to their bounden duties, they shall commit such persons to such place or keeping for their punishment as for the time and opportunity their wisdom shall think convenient."[127] Henry needed these voluntary surrenders as

[126] Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), Preface, p. xxxix. "In spite of Dr. Layton's denial—in spite even of the king's own denial conveyed to some monasteries by Cromwell—it is impossible not to suspect that the complete suppression of monastic houses had already been resolved on" (Calendar xiii. (1), Preface, p. vi.).

[127] Chapter-House Book, A $\frac{4}{10}$ f. 1, seqq. quoted by Gasquet, p. 302.

title-deeds for the possession of the monastic lands.[128] The free choice of the religious was a painful one. If they yielded up their houses they received a small pension; if they refused they were summarily ejected, left destitute, and perhaps further punished. It is hardly surprising that very few of the religious refused to surrender like Florence Bonnewe, the brave Prioress of Ambresbury. "At all times," wrote the commissioners to Cromwell, "she rested and so remaineth in these terms: 'If the King's highness command me to go from this house I will gladly go, though I beg my bread; and as for pension, I care for none.'"[129]

The Gilbertines made no resistance. The last unworthy Master of Sempringham was a creature of Cromwell, and the surrender of his houses can only have been a matter of arrangement between himself and his patron.

S. Catherine's outside Lincoln was the first to surrender. It may be that it fell before the other Lincolnshire houses because the Prior, William Griffith, persisted in his suit against Robert Holgate. On March 1, 1538, Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, wrote to Cromwell, begging him "to be good lord" to the Bishop of Llandaff, who was cited to appear before the King's commissioners by one of his own obedientiaries, William Griffith. He urged that the Bishop of Llandaff, who was on the Council of the North, did the King good service in these parts, and could not well be spared.[130] On May 31, 1538, William Griffith wrote to Cromwell begging his favour. He said that the Bishop of Llandaff had confessed before Cromwell to having a chalice of gold and a pair of censers belonging to the writer, "which be worth a great deal of money." He would give Cromwell a hundred marks out of it, and the rest should pay his debts to the King and others. As a postcript he

[128] Parliament confirmed the surrenders and vested the property of the religious houses in the King (31 Hen. VIII. c. 13).

[129] Calendar, vol. xiv. (1), No. 629.

[130] Ibid., vol. xiii. (1), No. 397.

added, "I pray I may speak with you before the Prior (*i.e.*, Prior General, the Master) of Sempringham comes. It shall be for the King's advantage."[131]

On July 14, 1538, William Griffith and thirteen canons signed the surrender of S. Catherine's in their chapter-house in the presence of Dr. Legh.[132]

The remaining Gilbertine houses in Lincolnshire survived for two months longer. Then Dr. William Petre came down to receive the surrenders. He had already taken his first spoils among the Gilbertines: John Green, Prior of Clattercote, and three canons had surrendered to him on August 22nd.[133]

On September 18th, Robert, Master of the Order of Sempringham, Roger, Prior of Sempringham, and sixteen canons surrendered their house.[134] The general form of surrender to which they set their common seal was drawn up by the commissioners. "Know," said the canons, "that by unanimous assent and consent, with deliberate purpose, with certain knowledge and free impulse, for some just and reasonable causes, being especially moved by our minds and consciences, we have of our own will and desire, granted the Priory of Sempringham to our most illustrious prince and lord, Henry VIII., Supreme Head of the English Church."[135] A detailed enumeration of all the possessions and rights of the house followed, and then the canons again declared that they made the renunciation of their own free will.

It is possible that the cell of Holland Brigg was included

[131] Calendar, vol. xiii. (1), No. 1103.

[132] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 608; 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii. p. 27.

[133] Ibid., p. 616. Dr. Petre wrote from Malton to Cromwell on August 16th to say that he was going to Clattercote (Calendar, vol. xiii. (2), 108).

[134] Ibid., p. 618; 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii. p. 40.

[135] Ibid., p. 618. *Cf.* other surrenders.

in the surrender of Sempringham, as it certainly fell at the same time.[136]

The progress of William Petre was rapid. William Hall, Prior of Haverholme, and six canons surrendered to him on September 24th ;[137] William Swift, Prior of Cattley, and two canons on the 25th ; [138] Richard Brytan, Prior of Bullingham, and nine canons on the 26th ; [139] James Wales, Prior of Sixhills, and seven canons on the 27th ; [140] Robert Dugelby, Prior of Alvingham, and seven canons on the 29th ; [141] Christopher Cartwright, Prior of North Ormesby, and five canons on the 30th ; [142] Richard Hobson, Prior of Newstead on Ancholme and five canons on October 2nd.[143] In a fortnight he had compassed the destruction of the Gilbertines in Lincolnshire.

Dr. Petre was unwearied. On October 3rd he was at Mattersey in the north of Nottinghamshire, and there received the surrender of the Prior, Thomas Norman, and four canons.[144]

The other Gilbertine houses were also falling. On August 26th Dr. Legh took the surrender of Fordham from the Prior, William Baynton, and three canons.[145] Two of these had come to the house since his visit in search of evil in 1535.[146] "There is not a poorer house in England," he wrote to Cromwell on September 3rd.[147]

[136] William Style, alias Skelton, was the last Prior of Bridgend (Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), No. 235). John Freeman had the nine Gilbertine houses and the cell (*i.e.* Bridgend) in view as early as June 1, 1536 (Calendar, vol. x, No. 1026). As receiver, he must have been on the mixed commission with the country gentlemen for Lincolnshire, and have ordered the priors to attend at the Court of Augmentations at Westminster. The returns for Lincolnshire are unfortunately not known to be extant.

[137] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 624 ; 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii. p. 22.

[138] Ibid., p. 624 ; Ibid., p. 15.

[139] Ibid., p. 619 ; Ibid., p. 10.

[140] Ibid., p. 619 ; Ibid., p. 41.

[141] Ibid., p. 604 ; Ibid., p. 7.

[142] Ibid., p. 604 ; Ibid., p. 36.

[143] Ibid., p. 604 ; Ibid., p. 33.

[144] Ibid., p. 618 ; Ibid., p. 31.

[145] Ibid., p. 608 ; Ibid., p. 21.

[146] *Cf.* page 170.

[147] Calendar, vol. xiii. (2), No. 275.

Dr. Layton included three Gilbertine houses in his work of dissolution in 1538. On October 14th, Roger, Prior of Mirmaud, surrendered with William Cristall, the only canon.[148] On October 15th Layton arrived at Shouldham; Elizabeth Fyncham, Prioress, and six of the nuns, signed the surrender with Robert Swift, the Prior, and nine canons.[149] A week later, on October 22nd, he was at Chicksand, the nuns of which had so bravely withstood him as visitor in 1535.[150] John Orrey, Prior, and six canons surrendered with Margaret Burton, Prioress, and seventeen nuns.[151]

The two small houses in Wiltshire fell to William Petre three months later. Thomas Lenewood, Prior of Poulton, surrendered with two canons on January 16th;[152] John Sympson, Prior of Marlborough, with four canons, on the same day.[153]

The commissioners of the north, George Lawson, Richard Belassez, William Blithman, and James Rokeby, wrote from York on December 15, 1538, to tell Cromwell that, amongst other monasteries, they had "quietly" taken the surrenders, and dissolved the priories of S. Andrew's at York and Ellerton. "We perceyved no murmure ore gruge in anye behalfe, bot were thanckefullye receyvede, as we shall within vj dayes more playnlie certefye your lordeshippe."[154] John Lepyngton, Prior of S. Andrew's, surrendered with three canons on November 28th,[155] John Golding, Prior of Ellerton, with five canons, on December 11th.[156]

[148] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 620; 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii. p. 31.

[149] Ibid., p. 620; Ibid. p. 40. [150] *Cf.* page 170.

[151] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 607; 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii. p. 16.

[152] Ibid., p. 638; Ibid., p. 38. [153] Calendar, vol. xiv. (1), No. 75.

[154] "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 167, Camden Society. This letter is assigned by Wright to 1537, but it must have been written in 1538, to correspond with the dates of the surrenders, 30 Hen. VIII. *Cf.* n. 155, 156.

[155] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 624; 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii. p. 51.

[156] Ibid., p. 631; Ibid., p. 20.

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[*Facing p.* 194.

On December 18th Sir George Lawson and William Blithman wrote to tell Cromwell that the Prior of Malton intended to surrender his house, if there were any Commission to receive it.[157] However, the Gilbertines of Malton and Watton held their houses for another year: as monasteries were falling everywhere, they must have known that their fate was sealed, and the time when they too would "of their own free will" deliver over their possessions to the King was only delayed for a little. Robert Holgate, who still held the Priory of Watton *in commendam*, surrendered with seven canons, two prioresses, and twelve nuns to John Uvedale on December 9, 1539.[158] Two days later Robert Holgate was at Malton, and joined with the Prior John Crawshawe, and nine canons in the surrender of the last Gilbertine house.[159]

As all the Gilbertines surrendered their houses to the King "of their own free will," [160] the King granted to each of the canons and nuns [161] a "reasonable yearly pension" for their "food and maintenance." [162] This he gave them

[157] Calendar, vol. xiii. (2), No. 1094.

[158] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 658; 8th Report of the Deputy Keeper, Appendix ii. p. 47.

[159] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 670; Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), No. 671. The surrenders of the houses of Hitchin, S. Edmund's, Cambridge, and Oveton are not extant. Hitchin and S. Edmund's, Cambridge, were probably surrendered in 1538 (*cf.* vol. xiv. (1), 1188). John Mounton, Prior of Hitchin, was pensioned (vol. xiv. (1), p. 600), and Humphrey Spensley, Prior of the White Canons of Cambridge (vol. xiv. (1), p. 600). There is no record of the Priory of Oveton at the Dissolution. It is not mentioned in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, and the reference to the Valor given by the editors of the Monasticon is to another Oveton, a cell of Hexham. No canon of Oveton is to be found in the pension list.

[160] Rymer, "Fœdera," vol. xiv. p. 618, &c.

[161] Out of 142 canons who signed the surrenders of their houses, the names of 137 occur in the pension lists. As these lists are dated two or three months after the surrenders, it is possible that the five other canons died in the interval. The nuns only signed the surrenders at Shouldham, Chicksand, and Watton; the names of these all occur in the pension lists.

[162] Augmentation Book, 233, f. 32, &c.

"out of the revenues of the Crown by his special favour, with his certain knowledge and of his own impulse, by the advice and consent of the Chancellor and Council of the Court of Augmentations.[163]

Owing to the poverty of the Order, the pensions received by the Gilbertine canons and nuns were small. Roger Marshall, Prior of Sempringham, received an annual pension of £30, besides the rectory of Fordham, worth £38, which was appropriated to his house.[164] In 1535 he was Prior of Marlborough.[165] In July, 1536, the Commission of country gentlemen reported that the "Governor of Saint Margaret's by Marlborough" was with the Master in London.[166] It is possible that this visit to Robert Holgate resulted in the promotion of Roger Marshall to be Prior of the head house of the Order, only too probably because he was under the influence of the Master. His income was almost double the highest received by any other Prior.

On July 14, 1538, the day of the surrender of his house, William Griffith, Prior of S. Catherine's outside Lincoln, demanded a pension of £50, besides certain farm stock, and the grange of Butham, worth 5 marks a year.[167] On November 10th he was granted £40 until he should get benefices to that value.[168] The Prior of Malton also received

[163] Augmentation Book, 233, f. 32, &c.

[164] Ibid., f. 32; Calendar, vol. xiv. (1), p. 598.

[165] Valor Ecclesiasticus, vol. ii. p. 148.

[166] *Cf.* p. 176, note 76. John Orrey, Prior of Newstead-on-Ancholme 26 Henry VIII., was Prior of Chicksand at the surrender. According to the Valor Ecclesiasticus, Thomas Robinson was Prior of North Ormesby in 1535. Browne Willis said that Christopher Cartwright, who signed the surrender in 1538, subscribed to the King's Supremacy in 1534. *Cf.* "Mitred Abbeys," vol. ii. p. 121.

[167] Calendar, vol. xiii. (1), No. 1379.

[168] Augmentation Book, 233, f. 78 b; Calendar, vol. xiv. (1), p. 599. A list of the names of those who received pensions is given in Calendar, vol. xiv. (1), pp. 596–611. The pensions awarded are only given for the heads of houses. The pensions given to the Order of Sempringham are to be found in Augmentation Book, 233. The folio references are in the Calendar.

£40,[169] the Prior of Chicksand £30.[170] The Priors of Bullington [171] and Sixhills [172] got £20 each. The other Priors all received smaller pensions, ranging down to the Prior of Mirmaud, who received £2 13s. 4d.[173]

The Prioresses of Sempringham,[174] Shouldham,[175] and Watton [176] each received £5; the others smaller pensions.

In most of the Gilbertine houses the canons and nuns each received 40s.;[177] one canon and one nun, who were perhaps sub-prior and sub-prioress, had a mark or two more than the others.[178] In four or five of the larger houses the canons received pensions as high as £4,[179] the nuns as much as 53s. 4d.[180]

It is possible that there were no lay-brothers in the Gilbertine houses at the Dissolution, as there is no evidence of any pensions paid to them. At some houses of other Orders lay-sisters were excluded from pensions because they had no share in the surrender of the house.[181] The five lay-sisters at S. Catherine's outside Lincoln received nothing.[182] At Watton eight sisters received 13s. 4d. each,[183] at Chicksand one sister was pensioned with the nuns.[184]

[169] Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), No. 671.
[170] Ibid., (1), p. 599.
[171] Ibid., p. 601.
[172] Ibid., p. 602.
[173] Ibid., p. 600.
[174] Ibid., p. 598.
[175] Ibid., p. 600.
[176] Ibid., xiv. (2), No. 664.

[177] At Bullington 7 canons received 40s., 12 nuns 40s. (Augmentation Book, 233, f. 134). At Alvingham 5 canons and 11 nuns each received 40s. (Ibid., f. 27).

[178] At Bullington John Franke received 4 marks, Margaret Prynefeld 46s. 8d. At Alvingham Robert Whyttyng received 53s. 4d., Margaret Talbot 66s. 8d. At Sempringham John Jacson received £6, Margaret Marbury £5.

[179] Four canons of Sempringham received £4, 5 canons 66s. 8d., 8 canons of Malton received £4, 7 canons of Watton £4.

[180] Four nuns of Sempringham received 66s. 8d., 7 nuns 33s. 4d. Several nuns at Watton received 53s. 4d.

[181] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 441.

[182] The names of these five lay-sisters are in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, vol. iv. p. 34; they are not found in the pension list.

[183] Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), No. 663.

[184] Ibid. (1), p. 599. Alice Spencer, "sister," signed the surrender.

The pensions were fairly well paid.[185] But the religious did not get the whole of their small pensions. For each quarterly payment the Crown officials had a right to a fee of fourpence, "but in practice," wrote Father Gasquet, "there is little doubt that much more was demanded."[186] Many of the religious, either from age or illness, were unable to receive their pensions in person, and were therefore obliged to pay "reasonable costs" to some one to get it for them.[187] Whenever Parliament granted a subsidy to the King, a part of the pensions were withheld—a tenth part in 1541, and a quarter in 1543.[188]

There is no doubt that the religious suffered much from hardships and privations, and many of them did not live long to apply for their pensions. In 1541 three canons and one nun of Shouldham were dead.[189] In 1553, out of 137 canons and 140 nuns who were granted pensions at the Dissolution, only 55 canons and 49 nuns were still receiving them.[190]

As a reward for his services, on July 16, 1540, Robert Holgate, Master of Sempringham, received a life grant of the Priory of Watton, except the church of the nuns, the manor of Watton, and seven others, all the possessions of the Priory, and the Master of Sempringham's "hedhous" in London, in the parish of S. Sepulchre's, without the walls towards Smithfield.[191] Watton Priory was the richest house of the Order; in the Valor its revenues were rated at £453 7s. 8d. in the total, £360 16s. 10½d. in clear income.[192] On June 26, 1540, he paid £276 for the house and site of

[185] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 443.
[186] Ibid., p. 444. [187] Ibid., p. 444.
[188] Ibid., p. 445.
[189] Ibid., p. 455. R. O. Exch. Mins. Accounts, 32–33 Hen. VIII., 235.
[190] Browne Willis, "The Mitred Abbeys," vol. ii., *cf.* Index. It is possible that some of the canons afterwards received benefices instead of their pensions. Thomas Norman, Prior of Mattersey, was Master of the school founded by Robert Holgate at Malton in 1546. *Cf.* Leach, "English Schools at the Reformation," part 2, p. 287.
[191] Calendar, vol. xvi. p. 715. [192] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 954.

Malton Priory, the church, steeple, churchyard, and demesne lands in Old Malton, and the fishery of the Derwent, for Sutton Grange and certain lands in the parish of Kirkby Overkarr.[193] The rent of these lands was 30s. 8d.

In 1545 Robert Holgate became Archbishop of York.[194] As he then married and favoured the doctrines and practices of the foreign reformers, he was arrested and sent to the Tower in Mary's reign. He was released on payment of a large fine, and he lived in retirement until his death on November 15, 1555, at the Master of Sempringham's house in Cow Lane, in the parish of S. Sepulchre's.

Like many other spoilers of the monasteries, he made some amends by founding three free grammar schools at Old Malton, Hemsworth, and York. By his will his property at Old Malton, besides other lands, was granted by his executors for the founding of a hospital for a master and twenty brethren and sisters at Hemsworth.

There is no record of the actual spoiling of one of the Gilbertine houses, but all over the country the same scenes of destruction were witnessed. One, whose father and uncle were present at the suppression of Roche Abbey, has left an account of it:—

"So soon as the Visitors were entred within the gates, they called the Abbot and other officers of the House, and caused them to deliver up to them all their keys and took an inventory of all their goods both within doors and without; for all such beasts, horses, sheep, and such cattle as were abroad in pastures or grange places, the Visitors caused to be brought into their presence: and when they had done so, turned the Abbot with all his convent and household forth out of the doors.

"Which thing was not a little grief to the Convent, and

[193] Calendar, vol. xv., No. 831 (73).

[194] *Cf.* "The Dictionary of National Biography"; and Hunter, "South Yorkshire," vol. ii. p. 430. The three grammar schools were founded by Letters Patent, 38 Henry VIII. The schools and hospital still exist.

all the servants of the House departing one from another, and especially such as with their conscience could not break their profession: for it would have made an heart of flint to have melted and wept to have seen the breaking up of the House, and their sorrowful departing, and the sudden spoil that fell the same day of their departure from the House. And every person had every good thing cheap, except the poor Monks, Friars, and Nuns, that had no money to bestow of anything: as it appeared by the suppression of an Abbey hard by me, called the Roche Abbey, a House of White Monks: a very fair builded House, all of freestone; and every house vaulted with freestone and covered with lead (as the Abbeys was in England as well as the Churches be). At the breaking up whereof an Uncle of mine was present, being well acquainted with certain of the monks there. . . . But such persons as afterward bought their corn and hay or such like, found all the doors either open, or the locks and shackles plucked away, or the door itself taken away, went in and took what they found, filched it away.

"Some took the Service Books that lied in the Church, and laid them upon their wain coppes to peice the same: some took windows of the Hayleith and hid them in their hay; and likewise they did of many other things: for some pulled forth the iron hooks out of the walls that bought none, when the yeomen and gentlemen of the country had bought the timber of the Church. For the Church was the first thing that was put to the spoil; and then the Abbot's lodging, Dorter, and Frater, with the cloister and all the buildings thereabout within the Abbey walls; for nothing was spared but the oxhouses and swine-coates, and such other houses of office, that stood without the walls; which had more favour showed them than the very Church itself: which was done by the advice of Cromwell, as Fox reporteth in his Book of Acts and Monuments. It would have pitied any heart to see what tearing up of the lead there was, and plucking up of

boards, and throwing down of the sparres: when the lead was torn off and cast down into the Church, and the tombs in the Church all broken (for in most Abbeys were divers noble men and women, yea and in some Abbeys Kings, whose tombs were regarded no more than the tombs of all other inferior persons: for to what end should they stand, when the Church over them was not spared for their cause), and all things of price either spoiled, carped away, or defaced to the uttermost.

"The persons that cast the lead into the fodders, plucked up all the seats in the choir, wherein the monks sat when they said service, which were like to the seats in minsters, and burned them and melted the lead therewithall: although there was wood plenty within a flight shot of them: for the Abbey stood among the woods and the rocks of stone: in which rocks was pewter vessels that was conveyed away and there hid: that it seemeth that every person bent himself to filch and spoil what he could: yea, even such persons were content to spoil them, that seemed not two days before to allow their religion and do great worship and reverence at their Mattins, Masses, and other service, and all other their doings: which is a strange thing to say, that they that could this day think it to be the House of God, and the next day the House of the Devil; or else they would not have been so ready to have spoiled it. For the better proof of my saying, I demanded of my father, thirty years after the Suppression, which had bought part of the timber of the Church, and all the timber in the steeple, with the bell-frame, with others his partners therein (in the which steeple hung viii, yea ix bells; whereof the least but one could not be bought at this day for xx^{li}, which bells I did see hang there myself more than a year after the Suppression), whether he thought well of the Religious persons and of the Religion then used? And he told me, Yea: for, said he, I did see no cause to the contrary. Well, said I, then how came it to pass that you was so ready to destroy and spoil the thing that you thought well of?

What should I do? said he. Might I not as well as others have some profit of the spoil of the Abbey? for I did see all would away; and therefore I did as others did."[195]

As soon as the surrenders of the Gilbertine houses in Lincolnshire were signed, the spoilers began their work. John Freeman, the royal receiver, was at Sempringham on September 17, 1538,[196] the day before the surrender of the Priory. On October 3rd he sent Cromwell a brief of the nine religious houses of "Gylberdynes" lately dissolved.[197] He estimated the revenues at £1,407; pensions to priors, canons, and nuns at £574 6s. 8d., the remainder being £832 13s. 4d. "The King is shrewdly charged with pensions, but has a good sort of benefices, and as they fall, may redeem a pension and give a benefice. Value of goods sold and unsold, deducting charges, £4,729 3s. 0d. When your Lordship sends any commission to one house in a shire, you may as well send to all in that shire, for they are in a readiness to surrender without any coming as doth appear by their acts."[198] The sale of the "stock, store, and domestical stufe" at Ellerton brought in £39 17s. 8d., at S. Andrew's beside York £9 3s.: the "Remainore of price of goods and catalle sold" was £25 17s. 8d. at Ellerton, £49 8s. at S. Andrew's.[199]

The plate of the monasteries was first seized, and with no regard for its beauty or workmanship, the King's officials assessed its value at its weight, and sent it to London to be melted down.[200] It is improbable, however, that much spoil of plate fell to the King from the Gilbertine houses. The Rule of the Order enjoined simplicity in all things, and the Order of Sempringham had never been rich enough or sufficiently well known to acquire costly chalices or patens. At Ellerton the plate weighed only

[195] Ellis, "Original Letters," 3rd Series, vol. iii. pp. 32–34. Written in 1591.
[196] Calendar, vol. xiii. (2), No. 366.
[197] Ibid. (2), No. 528.
[198] Ibid.
[199] MS. Harl., 604, f. 106, British Museum.
[200] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 404.

9 ounces, at S. Andrew's beside York 32 ounces.[201] The Gilbertines, too, could have had no great store of ecclesiastical vestments,[202] which were sold everywhere for very little. Old books were sold for a few pence as waste paper, and thus the greater part of the precious manuscripts with which the monastic libraries were filled, perished. "They who got the religious houses at the dissolution of them," wrote Bale, "took the libraries as part of the bargain and booty, reserving of those library books, some to scour their candlesticks, and some to rub their boots. Some they sold to the grocers and soapsellers, and some they sent over the seas to the bookbinders, not in small numbers, but at times whole shipfuls, to the wondering of foreign nations." And after this he also addeth, "I know a merchantman, which all the time shall be nameless, that bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings each, a shame it is to be spoken: this stuff hath he occasioned instead of grey paper by the space of more than these ten years, and yet he hath enough for many years to come."[203]

The lead off the roof was the chief source of profit from the monastic churches. "Bands of workmen," wrote Father Gasquet, "went about from place to place throughout the country, lit their fires in the naves or chancels of abbey churches, and occupied themselves for days, and even in some cases weeks, in melting the coverings of roofs, and the gutters, spouts, and pipes from the building into pigs and fodders, the sale of which might add a few pounds to the royal plunder. The casting completed, other workmen arrived to convey the fodders to a place of safety, where they might remain till purchased or used. Round the cathedral of Lincoln the metal melted from the roofs of the monastic churches of the district was piled for

[201] *Cf.* note 198.

[202] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 414.

[203] Quoted by Spelman, "The History and Fate of Sacrilege," p. 218, ed. 1853.

use." [204] Bells were also broken up and sold. Three fodder of lead were obtained both at Ellerton and at S. Andrew's, two bells at Ellerton and three at S. Andrew's.[205]

Superfluous buildings were demolished everywhere, except only those which might be useful for farm purposes.[206] John Freeman wrote "to Cromwell that the walls of the houses in Lincolnshire were thick, and there were few to buy. 'To pull them down,' he said, 'will cost the King a good deal,' and so it is best to get the bells and lead 'which will rise well.' And 'this done, to pull down the roofs, battlements, and stairs, and let the walls stand, and charge some with them as a quarry of stone to make sales of as they that have need will fetch.'" [207] This was the fate of Watton Priory in 1613, the stones were taken for the repair of Beverley Minster.[208]

Several of the Gilbertine houses were granted away soon after their surrenders, so it is possible that in some cases the destruction of the buildings was left to the new owner. In December, 1538, Dr. William Petre secured for himself, his wife Gertrude, and his heirs in tail male, the house and site of Clattercote Priory, the church, steeple, and churchyard, and all its possessions in Clattercote and Cropredy.[209]

On January 2, 1539, Edward Fiennes, Lord Clinton and Saye, was granted the church and site of the dissolved monastery of Sempringham, the church, steeple, and churchyard, the manor of Sempringham, and the priory lands in Horbling, Billingborough, and elsewhere.[210] The estate was

[204] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," pp. 419, 420.

[205] *Cf.* note 198.

[206] Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," p. 423.

[207] Ibid., p. 424, ex R. O. Cromwell Correspondence, xii. 64.

[208] Oliver, "History and Antiquities of Beverley," p. 194.

[209] Calendar vol. xiii. (2), g. 1182 (15). The property was afterwards granted by Henry VIII. to Christ Church College, Oxford. In 1560 it was granted to Henry Lee. It is now in the possession of the Cartwright family, who have held it for many generations.

[210] Ibid., vol. xiv. (1), g. 191 (10); *cf.* also vol. xiii. (2), No. 1020.

entailed on him and his heirs for ever on payment of an annual rent of £10 11s. On the site of the monastery Lord Clinton built for himself a very fine house.[211] He also received the rectories of Sempringham with Poynton chapel, Stowe, with Birthorpe chapel, Billingborough and Walcot.[212]

On January 2, 1539, Lord Clinton was granted Haverholme Priory in like manner for the annual rent of 52s. 7d.[213] The lease of the house and site and certain lands of the late priory, except the timber and buildings ordered to be destroyed, had been granted for twenty-one years to Thomas Hall, of Huntingdon, on November 20, 1538. Thomas Hall had writen to Cromwell on September 16th, reminding him of his promise that if the Priory of Haverholme should come to the King's hands, he would help him to get the farm of the demesnes at a reasonable rent. He heard that the commissioners were coming to dissolve the houses of the Order of Sempringham, and begged Cromwell to see that Haverholme was inserted in the commission.[214] The reversion of the lease and the rent were granted to Lord Clinton.[215]

Two other Gilbertine houses were among the dozen monasteries which fell to Lord Clinton. On January 16, 1541, he was granted the Priory of Holland Brigg,[216] and in 5 Edward VI. the site of Alvingham Priory.[217]

In 1539, Bullington[218] and S. Catherine's[219] outside Lincoln fell to Charles, Duke of Suffolk, who obtained in

[211] Camden, "Britannia," p. 464, ed. 1695.

[212] Calendar, vol. xiii. (2), No. 1020.

[213] *Et. seq.*, Ibid., vol. xiv. (1), g. 191 (10).

[214] Ibid., vol. xiii. (2), No. 362.

[215] A moiety of the Priory and its demesne was transferred to William Torrold in 36 Henry VIII. Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 948.

[216] Calendar, vol. xvi. g. 947 (32).

[217] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 957.

[218] Calendar, vol. xiv. (1), g. 661 (45).

[219] He alienated the manor of S. Catherine's and certain lands attached to it to Vincent Grantham and his son Thomas in 1540. Calendar, vol. xv. g. 831 (19).

all no less than thirty monasteries, perhaps as a reward for his services in putting down the rebellion in Lincolnshire.

Three houses were granted to two of the commissioners in Lincolnshire in 1539, Sixhills to Sir Thomas Heneage,[220] North Ormesby and Newstead-on-Ancholme to Robert Heneage.[221] Robert Carr of Sleaford, whose father was a rich merchant of the Staple,[222] purchased the house and site of Cattley, besides several granges belonging to other Gilbertine houses, for £400, and a rent of 11s. 10d. for Cattley, on December 24, 1539.[223] John Freeman, the royal receiver, got possession of Hotoft Grange belonging to Bullington Priory, and Utterby Grange belonging to North Ormesby, on August 31, 1539.[224]

On February 28, 1540, the house and site of Chicksand, its demesne lands and other possessions, were granted to Richard Snowe of London for £810 11s. 8d.[225] On July 3rd, Philip Parrys,[226] who was left in charge at Fordham after

[220] Calendar, vol. xiv. (1), g. 651 (49). The Heneages of Sixhills are among the very few families on whom the curse of sacrilege has not fallen. They have held the property in direct succession. *Cf.* Sir Henry Spelman, "The History and Fate of Sacrilege," p. 95, ed. 1853.

[221] Ibid., vol. xiv. (2), g. 264 (5). On October 11, 1539, Robert Heneage alienated the house and site of Newstead-on-Ancholme to John Bellow of Legbourne and his heirs. Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), 435 (6). Sir Thomas and Robert Heneage were the sons of John Heneage of Hainton, near Wragby. They were active supporters of Cromwell's ecclesiastical policy. Sir Thomas Heneage was knighted in 1537. "He died in 1553 and was buried in Hainton Church, where a monument with effigies in brass of himself and his wife still remains." Sir Thomas Heneage, vice-chamberlain of Queen Elizabeth's household, was the son of Robert Heneage. *Cf.* "Dictionary of National Biography."

[222] "About a mile from Hayder," wrote Leland, "I saw the ruines of Catteley Priory, now longging to one Car of Sleford, a proper gentilman whos father was a riche Marchaunt of the Staple." "Itinerary," ed. Hearne, vol. i. p. 27.

[223] Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), g. 780 (38). [224] Ibid., g. 113 (11).

[225] Ibid., vol. xv. g. 282 (124). The lands were bought from Snowe in 1576 by Peter Osborn, and have remained in the hands of his descendants ever since. [226] Ibid., vol. xiii. (2), No. 275.

the surrender to Dr. Legh on September 3, 1538, received a grant of the late priory.[227] On November 4th Antony Neville, esquire of the Royal Body, was granted Mattersey Priory, and purchased the manor of Mattersey with other lands belonging to the priory for £319 6s. 8d.[228]

John Aske, of Aughton on the Derwent, obtained the site of Ellerton Priory in exchange in 33 Henry VIII.[229] He saved the Priory church from destruction, for in it were the tombs of several of his ancestors.[230]

The late Priory of S. Edmund's at Cambridge was granted to Edward Elvyngton and Humphrey Metcalfe in 37 Henry VIII.[231] The manor of Bigging Priory in the town of Hitchin was purchased by John Cokks of Broxbourne on August 18, 1545.[232] The site of S. Andrew's outside York was granted to John Bellow and John Broxholme in 37 Henry VIII.[233]

[227] Calendar, vol. xv. g. 942 (19). The property was bought by Gerard Russell (third son of Sir William Russell of Chippenham), who was member of Parliament for Cambridgeshire in 1678. His son, William Russell, succeeded him, and on his death, in 1701, the property was sold to Sir Charles Wager, who built a fine house in the place of the old one belonging to the Russells. He afterwards sold the property to Edward Harrison, Esq., Governor of Fort S. George, whose only daughter heir brought it in marriage to Charles, Lord Viscount Townshend. William Metcalfe, Esq., bought the estate from Lord Townshend; and his son, James Metcalfe, sold it in 1790 to Francis Noble, Esq. He pulled down Sir Charles Wager's house, and erected a square red-brick building. The property was sold by him to the family of Dunn Gardiner. "A Brief Sketch of the Past History of the Parish of Fordham," by the Rev. John Bell, a pamphlet kindly lent to me by the Rev. W. Ivatt, Vicar of Fordham.

[228] Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), g. 619 (6). The property has passed through the hands of several families, and is now in the possession of the Duke of Portland.

[229] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 975.

[230] They were buried in the priory by will: "Margaret, relict of Richard Aske of Aghton, 1466, in the quire. Sir John Aske, knight, 1497, before the image of Mary, where the gospel was read." Burton, Monasticon Eboracense, p. 262.

[231] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 982. [232] Ibid. [233] Ibid., p. 962.

The late Priory of S. Margaret's outside Marlborough was assigned to Anne of Cleves as part of her jointure in 1539.[234] It was afterwards granted to Antony Stringer in exchange.[235]

The site of Watton Priory, which had been granted to Robert Holgate for life, was transferred to John, Earl of Warwick, in 1550.[236]

The priory and lands of Shouldham remained in the hands of the Crown until 1553, when they were granted to Thomas Mildmay, Esquire, for £1,049 9s. 4½d.[237]

Mirmaud was granted by Queen Elizabeth to Perceval Bowes and John Mosyer.[238]

[234] Calendar, vol. xiv. (2), No. 432.

[235] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 981.

[236] Ibid., p. 954. In the reign of Elizabeth it was in the possession of John Farnham. Aftewards King James confirmed the abbey and manor to Sir Thomas Earlkyn, knight. From him the property passed to the Bethell family. Oliver, "The History and Antiquities of Beverley," p. 528.

[237] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 974.

[238] Ibid., p. 979.

VIII

THE REMAINS OF THE GILBERTINE PRIORIES.

THE Church of S. Andrew at Sempringham still remains.[1] It is, however, only a portion of the cruciform church, with a tower at the intersection, which Jocelin, the Norman knight, built on his own demesne. In 1788 the Norman chancel and the transepts were pulled down, probably to avoid the cost of repairs, as so large a church was no longer needed. An apsidal chancel, about seven feet deep, was erected at that date. In consequence of the destruction of the Norman chancel and transepts, the tower is now at the east end of the church; it was built on the foundation of the original Norman tower, and is a fine specimen of Perpendicular work with eight rich pinnacles. The interior consists of a nave and north aisle separated by four Norman bays. The south porch is purely Norman, projecting but slightly from the wall; there are, however, indentations in the buttresses on each side of the doorway which show that there was a

[1] This account of S. Andrew's is taken from two pamphlets kindly lent to me by Dr. Wrenford, the present vicar, "The Proposed Restoration of Sempringham Abbey Church," 1867, and "Some Incidents in the History of a Lincolnshire Saint," a paper read at the meeting of the Lincolnshire Architectural Society at Great Grimsby, June 19, 1878, by the Rev. John C. K. Saunders, M.A., Rector of Freesthorpe and late Vicar of Sempringham. In both these pamphlets there is a confusion between the parish church of S. Andrew and the monastery church of S. Mary. *Cf.* also Murray's Handbook for Lincolnshire, p. 104, for a description of the church.

larger porch with a roof over it. Here S. Gilbert lived with his chaplain when he first left the house of his parishioner in Sempringham. A new porch, erected as a memorial of the Diamond Jubilee, was consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln in November, 1899. Through the deeply recessed doorway containing the old fir door, covered with iron scroll-work, S. Gilbert must have often passed. The north doorway is a plain Norman arch. When the church was restored in 1869 the north wall, against which S. Gilbert built a dwelling for the first seven nuns, was taken down to be rebuilt, because it was very much out of the perpendicular. It was then discovered that the foundation was formed of three tiers of thin stones set edgeways.

In 1816 there were but five houses in the parish, and these were two miles from the church in the fen. It now serves as the parish church for Pointon and Folkingham.[2]

The monastery built around the Church of S. Mary about 1148 stood in a pasture nearly west of the parish church of S. Andrew. A series of mounds still marks the foundations of the two cloisters with their adjacent buildings. In 1816, wrote Mr. Marrat of Boston, there was not left one stone above ground.[3] At that time the garden walls around the splendid house which Lord Clinton erected on the site of the priory were still standing, but now these too have utterly disappeared. In the same pasture is an ancient well, and in another, close by, the fishpond of the monastery is still to be seen.

The church of Alvingham Priory is now the parish church for North Cockerington.[4] The Church of S. Mary, North Cockerington, stood, with the Church of S. Adel-

[2] "The History of Lincolnshire, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive," by W. Marrat, vol. iii. p. 131. Boston, 1816.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Associated Architectural Societies' Reports, vol. xii. 1873; Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society, p. 9; Murray's Handbook for Lincolnshire, p. 173.

wold at Alvingham, inside the inclosure of the priory.[5] By the ordination of Hugh of Wells the two parish churches were served by one vicar, with a deacon to help him. At some period subsequent to the Dissolution the Church of S. Mary fell into decay, and the Priory Church of S. Mary at Alvingham was given to the inhabitants of North Cockerington as their parish church. The Church of S. Adelwold still stands within the same churchyard, on the northern side. The Gilbertine church consists of a nave of two bays, with two arches to the south aisle, a chancel, and a small modern tower at the west end of the aisle. There is a three-light lancet window, with widely splayed jambs, on the north side of the nave. The chancel arch is Early English. The plain font rests on the chamfered base of an old Norman pillar. On the north side of the chancel is the head of a narrow Norman window, and a part of the old stringcourse above it. The cross-legged knight, whose mutilated effigy lies in the church, was doubtless a benefactor of the priory.

Two miles from Brigg, on the banks of the Ancholme, a farmhouse stands on the site of Newstead Priory. In it is a large vaulted room with circular arches dating from the foundation of the priory. It is supposed to have been the chapter-house, but possibly it was the frater. In a room above is a Perpendicular window.[6]

Until 1770 some of the buildings of the Priory at Holland Brigg were standing.[7] In that year they were taken down and a large farmhouse was built, near the site, out of the old materials. The site, about a mile and a half east of Horbling, on the Holland Road, is now overgrown with grass.[8]

No other buildings remain of the Gilbertine priories in

[5] *Cf.* Chapter V., p. 107.

[6] Murray's Handbook for Lincolnshire, p. 189, confirmed by the Rev. B. Claye, Vicar of Brigg.

[7] "The History of Lincolnshire, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive," by W. Marrat, vol. iii. p. 151. Boston, 1816.

[8] Murray's Handbook for Lincolnshire p. 103.

Lincolnshire. At Cattley the pavement and some bases of pillars and monumental slabs have been uncovered occasionally.[9] At Haverholme the base of a clustered Early English pier and some coffin slabs, uncovered in the shrubberies of the seat of the Earl of Winchelsea, are the sole remains.[10] The moat and part of the foundations of Bullington Priory are still to be seen."[11] An old rubble shed at Sixhills, half pulled down about 1877, is said to have been a part of the grange of the priory.[12] There is no trace of the priories at North Ormesby[13] and S. Catherine's outside Lincoln.[14]

The parish church of S. Mary at Old Malton is a portion of the priory church.[15] It consisted originally of a nave, 142 feet in length, having two bays more than at present, with groined side-aisles, two western towers, a central tower between the nave and the choir, transepts with square eastern chapels of somewhat unusual plan,[16] a choir with aisles, and a square eastern end projecting beyond them. In 1636 the high central tower was taken down, and sub-

[9] Murray's Handbook for Lincolnshire, p. 92.

[10] Ibid., p. 91, confirmed by the Rev. H. Stowel Smith, Rector of Ruskington.

[11] This information was kindly sent me by the Rev. I. Dixon Spain, Rector of Rand S. Oswald.

[12] "The Story of England," by Robert Mannynge of Bourne, ed. Furnivall, Introduction, p. xxii.

[13] Letter from the Rev. H. Nevitt, Vicar of Nun Ormsby.

[14] Murray's Handbook for Lincolnshire, p. 61. Cf. *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 185–189, for an interesting account of excavations on the site of S. Catherine's in 1876. The first Eleanor Cross was erected outside the Priory Gates. Each newly consecrated Bishop was bound to pass the night before his installation at S. Catherine's, to walk thence, barefoot, to the cathedral on the next morning. *Cf.* "Lincoln Cathedral Statutes," ed. Bradshaw and Wordsworth, part ii. p. 553.

[15] Brabner's Gazetteer; Murray's Handbook for Yorkshire, p. 167. Letter from Rev. W. Ingham, Vicar of Old Malton, and a pamphlet kindly lent by him. For a view showing some of the buildings still standing in 1728, *cf.* King's Library, K 45 (57) b, British Museum.

[16] Ibid.

sequently a fire seems to have destroyed the south aisle. Between 1732 and 1734 the parishioners took down the remaining aisle and clerestory, and removed the choir. In 1877 the fine south-west tower was underpinned and repaired. Of the north-west tower only the base remains. The whole of the west front was apparently built in the latter half of the twelfth century. The greater part of the aisles have completely disappeared, and a wall has been built up between the nave piers. These piers and the arches of the nave, which are Transitional Norman, are probably part of the original work. A triforium with large arches runs above the piers. When the church was restored in 1889 the floor was lowered to its original level, and a new oak roof in the style of the fifteenth century took the place of the old one. Only the foundations of the eastern part of the church beyond the nave can now be traced.

To the south of the church are the foundations of the cloister. Close to it is a house called "The Abbey," with a crypt beneath it. The Cross Keys Inn in Wheelgate stands on the site of one of the hospitals in the charge of the canons of Malton. The crypt still remains. It is nearly square, and has a groined Norman roof resting on massive piers, with sculptured capitals.

On the south of the churchyard stands the schoolhouse of the Free Grammar School founded by Robert Holgate.

Until 1847 the nave of the priory church served as the parish church of Ellerton.[17] It was destroyed in that year, and the new church was built. Some shields of stained glass were placed in the windows of the present church.

An old house called "The Abbey" was built with some of the materials of Watton Priory;[18] it stands at a short distance from the foundations of the buildings, and is supposed to have been erected on the site of the Farmery. Excavations undertaken by the East Riding Antiquarian

[17] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 975; Burton, Monasticon Eboracense, p. 259. Letter from the Rev. G. Robinson, Vicar of Ellerton.

[18] Murray's Handbook for Yorkshire, p. 147. See Appendix.

Society in 1893 have revealed some most interesting details. When Eustace Fitzjohn gave the site in 1150, the church and buildings were at once begun. In 1167 the church was destroyed by fire. The excavations at the east end show the foundations and two or three courses of the original Norman church, and upon these foundations was erected the subsequent church of Norman Transitional character, of which such extensive remains have now been exposed. The church measures 208 feet long by 51 feet broad, but this breadth does not include the two transepts, which are of somewhat irregular shape, and the ground-plan of which has not yet been ascertained. The church was divided throughout its entire length from east to west by a substantial partition wall, nearly five feet thick. In some parts this wall remains, now that the *débris* has been removed, to a height of about four feet. It seems probable that this wall was surmounted above the eye level by an open arcade which served to support the roof; various rounded stones and parts of capitals have been found amongst the rubbish. This wall divides the church into two unequal parts, that on the south side, which was undoubtedly occupied by the canons and lay-brothers, being some nineteen feet in width, whilst the north side, used by the nuns and serving sisters, attains a breadth of twenty-six feet. The full complement was a hundred and forty women to seventy men. The dividing wall in the choir is broken off a few feet from the east end for an archway which was occasionally opened for processions and at funerals. A little further east in the wall is a remarkable window opening, rounded within and twenty-one inches across. This is the exact size of the turn-table window through which the canons restored the chalice to the nuns when mass was over.

On the north side of the church lay the cloister of the nuns, about a hundred feet square and having an alley ten feet wide. The buildings around the quadrangle have not yet been examined, nor has the position of the smaller

cloister of the canons been ascertained. The massive walls of the church, mostly six feet thick, have a substantial core of chalk, but are faced with good hard ashlar. This stone is of a different quality from the stone which was imported into Holderness for ecclesiastical purposes, and abounds in ammonites and other fossils. It has been suggested that this came by sea from Whitby, and thence up the Hull and a small tributary stream from Watton."[19]

The excavations at Watton have been continued on two subsequent occasions,[20] and the result will be published in the Transactions of the East Riding Antiquarian Society.

Nothing remains of the priories at Oveton[21] and at S. Andrew's in Fishergate, York. "In the road to Fulforth from hence," wrote Drake in 1736, "in a place called Stone-wall-close, stood once the Priory of S. Andrew."[22]

A few arches, probably part of the cloister, remain on the south bank of the river Idle, to mark the site of Mattersey Priory.[23] Much more was to be seen twenty years ago, but the ruin is now crumbling away. In the vestry of the parish church of All Saints is a curious bas-relief in stone representing the legends of the finding of the cross by S. Helena, and S. Martin dividing his cloak with the beggar.[24] It is believed that the sculpture came from the priory which was dedicated to S. Helena. Some fragments of old-stained glass in the east window of the north aisle were perhaps also in the Priory church.

Nothing is left of Shouldham Priory.[25] Some years ago, when some new farm premises were built, the foundations, apparently, of the church were discovered. Many large

[19] *Athenæum*, October 7, 1893.
[20] Letter from the Rev. G. W. Purchas, Vicar of Watton.
[21] Brabner's Gazetteer.
[22] Drake, "History and Antiquities of York," p. 249.
[23] Letter from the Rev. S. Kennedy, Vicar of Mattersey.
[24] For an illustration of this sculpture *cf.* Thoroton, "History of Nottinghamshire," vol. iii. p. 442.
[25] Letter from the Rev. W. M. Allen, Vicar of Shouldham.

stones were pulled up and used as pavement. Cottages and other buildings have pieces of the Barnack stone in the walls, but carved work is seldom found.

The scholars of Peterhouse who, throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were buying up lands and tenements around St. Edmund's Priory,[26] purchased the garden of the White Canons, on the south of Peterhouse, in the reign of Elizabeth.[27] It was anciently called "Volye Croft," afterwards "English Croft" and "The New Gardens." The college let it out on lease as a garden, reserving the right to use it for recreation or exercise; the tenant was bound to keep the walks "fair and passable and well graviled." In 1795 the college let out two-thirds on the eastern side on a building lease, as at present. "Chanons Close," the house of the Gilbertine students, stood directly opposite to Volye Croft on the east side of Trumpington Street. "The south wall of the site of the Fitzwilliam Museum," wrote Mr. Willis Clark, "would fall in a line with the north wall of the Close, which has now become the site of Addenbrook's Hospital.

A house called "The Abbey" stands on the manor of Biggin Priory at Fordham, but there are no remains of the buildings.[28] On the north side of the nave of the church of S. Peter is a curious chapel of two stories, which tradition says was connected with the Gilbertines. The parish church of S. Peter was given in 1227 by Henry III. to the nuns of Sempringham to cover the expenses of the general chapter;[29] in 1305 Clement V. granted a license for the appropriation of the church for that purpose.[30] The church is mainly Early English, and an Early English doorway on the north of the nave opens into the lower

[26] J. Willis Clark, "The Architectural History of Cambridge," vol. i. pp. 5, 6.

[27] *Et seq.*, Ibid.

[28] "A Brief Sketch of the Past History of the Parish of Fordham," by the Rev. John Bell, Vicar of Fordham, 1873. This pamphlet was kindly lent to me by the Rev. A. W. Ivatt, Vicar of Fordham. *Cf.* also Murray's Handbook for the Eastern Counties, p. 414.

[29] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 947.

[30] *Cf.* Chapter VI., p. 142.

story of the chapel, which consists of six bays, vaulted with stone ribs springing from Late Decorated responds, and carried on two central detached piers. The upper story, likewise thirty feet long by fourteen feet broad, is of Late Decorated character. A doorway, now blocked, once led into the church, and the upper chapel is now entered by an outside staircase turret at the north-west corner. There can be little doubt that this chapel was built by the Prior and Convent of Sempringham, probably after the appropriation of the church, for the use of the small cell of canons at Fordham. Possibly these canons, who settled here shortly before 36 Henry III.,[31] had previously only a small oratory.

There are no remains of the buildings at Mirmaud, on the Priory estate, now known as Orman's Farm.[32]

At Chicksand Priory, now the seat of Sir Algernon Osborn, there are considerable remains of the original buildings.[33] The house is ranged round one of the cloisters. The east, west, and south walls, of enormous thickness, date, apparently, from the first half of the thirteenth century. They were entirely remodelled, partly by Ware in the middle of the last century, and partly by Wyatt at the beginning of this century. The north wall has been very much altered. The steep chesnut roofs of the priory still remain, the roof on the east side being richer than those on the others. A vaulted substructure of two bays in width, with a central range of piers, ran all around the cloister. It remains only along the west side and part of the south side: the lower library, chapel, laundry, and other offices now occupy this space. Like the walls, the cloister dates from the first half of the thirteenth century, though a part of it is rather later. The arrangement of the stories be-

[31] Monasticon, vi. 2, p. 982. [32] Ibid., p. 979.

[33] Murray's Handbooks for Herts, Beds, and Hunts, pp. 154–157. *Cf.* Associated Architectural Societies' Reports, vol. viii., Bedford Architectural Society, p. 329. For a view of Chicksand Priory in 1730 *cf.* King's Library, K 7 (12).

tween the roofs and the cloister has been entirely altered. Either Ware or Wyatt removed the piers and vaulting from the other sides and the cloister. An arched doorway on the northern side leads into the quadrangle.

Tradition assigns the smaller cloister to the north side of the house. No trace of the church remains. The burial ground was east of the large cloister; coffins, bones, fragments of pottery and glass have been found here. A waterfall on the tributary of the Ivel marks the site of the Prior's mill.

The mansion house called the Biggin, with a small garden on the south bank of the Hiz, and other lands and buildings formerly belonging to the priory at Hitchin, was left for charitable purposes by the will of Joseph Kemp, M.A., schoolmaster, dated July 17, 1654.[34] Eighteen poor women still dwell in it.[35] The Biggin is an ancient structure, but there are no remains of an earlier date than the seventeenth century. The wooden pillars in the cloister and a few relics of panelling in some of the rooms appear to belong to the reign of James I.

An ancient house now stands on the site of Clattercote Priory. A part of the church still remains, but it has suffered much, and is now only a storehouse for lumber. A wooden floor divides it into two stories, the upper one being entered by a flight of steps outside. The fine oak rafters of the roof are in a terrible state of disrepair. On one side was a door leading into the burial ground, in which coffins and bones have been discovered. A portion of the vaulted cloister runs along the other side. The series of cellars of arched brick-work under the present house were either another portion of the cloister, or a part of the domestic buildings. The moat can still be traced, but it has been recently filled up. The dovecot stands in front of the house. A quarter of a mile away is a lake twenty-two acres in extent. It is known as the Lepers' Bath, and

[34] Cussan, "History of Hertfordshire," vol. ii. p. 54.

[35] Letter from the Rev. L. Hensley, Vicar of S. Mary's, Hitchin.

THE BIGGIN, HITCHIN, 1900.

[*Facing p.* 218.

tradition says that an underground passage connected it with the priory.[36]

Until 1873 the priory church of S. Mary served as the parish church for Poulton.[37] It was a very perfect specimen of Decorated work, and had, apparently, not been altered in any way since it was built in 1348. It was then pulled down that the materials might be used to build the present church of S. Michael and All Angels on another site. Almost all the ashlar in the priory church had been previously used for building. Except the woodwork, all the material was used again for the present church. The windows of the old church are in S. Michael and All Angels, the east window being in the south wall.

A fragment of S. Margaret's Priory, Marlborough, was converted into some cottages, standing on the left of the railway station.[38]

The remains of the only English monastic Order are, indeed, very few, but, to those who have read its history, they must be full of interest. It is probable that excavations on the sites of the priories, like those at Watton, would bring to light much that is now hidden from view.

[36] Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Oxford, 1852, p. 642. Printed and published by Robert Gardner.

[37] A letter written by an eye-witness of the destruction, kindly lent to me by the Rev. W. J. Mayne, formerly Vicar of Poulton.

[38] Murray's Handbook for Wilts and Dorset, p. 83.

APPENDIX

BY the courtesy of Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, I am able to print a series of extracts from his paper entitled "The Gilbertine Priory of Watton, in the East Riding of Yorkshire," in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. lviii. pp. 1–34. They afford an explanation of the plan facing p. 55, but, being only extracts, they give no adequate idea of the extreme interest of the paper. It should be noticed that several mistakes, derived from other sources, and now corrected in the "Errata," were printed in the book before I received this paper.

"The Nuns' Court."

"As will be seen from the plan, the south-western quarter of the site is practically cut off from the rest by ditches on all four sides, as if to form a precinct in itself. In the centre of this stood what was no doubt the house and court of the nuns. It consisted of a cloister, with the church on the south, the chapter-house and warming-house, etc., on the east, the frater on the north, and a western range with buildings extending from it westwards. The kitchen stood semi-detached on the north-west." [1]

"The *claustrum*, or cloister, was oblong in form, and measured 98 feet from east to west and 113 feet from north to south. The centre was a grass plat surrounded by covered alleys, but of these no remains were found to give any clue to a date. The east, north, and west alleys were chiefly passages, with doorways opening from them into the various offices round the cloister. The south alley was practically the living room of the nuns, where they sat and read when not engaged in the church or elsewhere."

"The church was 206 feet long, and consisted of a presbytery, central tower, and nave, a north transept with two eastern chapels, and a broad south aisle extending the length of the church, with a

[1] *Et seq.*, p. 9.

south transept, a south chapel, and another adjunct opening out of it."

"The presbytery was 26½ feet wide and of two bays, divided midway by four steps extending right across. These led up to the altar platform, which was paved with chalk blocks."[2] . . . "On the south was a wide opening into the aisle, where a similar chalk platform existed at the same level as the other, but of the steps up to it only the lowest was left. A few feet to the west of the opening there were the remains in the wall of a somewhat curious construction." . . .

"The recess was evidently made to put something into, and it not improbably formed a *fenestra versatilis*, and contained a turntable or wheel for passing things from the canons to the nuns on the other side of the wall." . . .[3]

"The nave has been so ruined that little else now exists than the lower part of the north wall towards the west, and the massive chalk core of the west wall. There was no western entrance, but in the north wall a doorway on the extreme west led into the buildings there abutting on the church, and there was certainly one and perhaps two entrances from the cloister into the nave. The wall on which the arcade stood was 4 feet 11 inches thick. . . . There were no signs of a western respond, nor of the wall having continued up to the west wall. Possibly, therefore, it stopped against some pier or other such abutment a little in advance of the wall, and belonging to a galilee or narthex in line with the internal projections shown on the plan."[4]

"The south aisle was 19¼ feet wide, and had a stair turret in its south-east angle projecting into the church. There are no traces of any doorways from without."

"The chapel opening out of the aisle was 28 feet long and 14 feet wide, and entered by a wide archway. . . . A chalk wall, 2 feet thick, divided the chapel from another east of it. This was entered from the aisle by an archway like the other."

"The greater part of the church seems, from the architectural remains, to have been all of one date, *circa* 1170, but there are also traces of an earlier building of the time of the foundation of the priory beneath the later east end. The western part of the nave was also perhaps of the earlier date."[5]

The first church on the site was burnt in 1167.[6]

"There can be little doubt that the building just described formed the *ecclesia sanctimonialium* of the Statutes. The main or northern division served as the nuns' church and had their quire under the crossing, with probably the quire of the sisters in the nave. The aisle or southern division served as the quire of the canons, probably

[2] *Et seq.*, p. 10. [3] *Cf.* diagram, p. 11. [4] *Et seq.*, p. 12.
[5] P. 13. [6] Ibid.

with the quire of the *conversi* in its western half. Between the two presbyteries was (1) an archway for the passage of processions, etc., and (2) a turn through which the nuns could take holy water and receive the pax and be communicated. The north transept may have been the place provided in the church where the sick nuns could be anointed, and it no doubt contained a staircase from the nuns' dorter to enable them to come directly into church for the night offices."[7]

"Next to the transept, into which there was a doorway from it, was a chamber 12 feet wide and twice as long, with an entrance from the cloister. . . . This was probably the *auditorium* or parlour."

"The *capitulum*, or chapter-house, which adjoined the parlour, was 66 feet long and 23 feet wide. Its entrance from the cloister has been utterly destroyed, and just within it a lime-kiln measuring 12 feet by 10 feet has been made, no doubt soon after the Suppression, for converting into lime the chalk of which so much of the walls was built."

"The remains of the north wall suggest that the chapter-house has been lengthened by about one-third, probably in the fourteenth century."[8]

"From the chapter-house there extended northward a vaulted undercroft of five bays, about 90 feet long and 23½ feet wide, divided into two alleys by a central row of octagonal pillars. . . . The east wall had, in the second bay from the chapter-house, a recess like a fireplace, and there were doorways from without in the third and fifth bays. . . . The building probably served, at any rate as regards its southern end, as the *calefactorium* or warming-house."

"Over all the buildings described above, from the church northwards, was the usual place of the *dormitorium* or dorter. It would thus have been nearly 120 feet long, and have also extended over the chapter-house."[9]

"Some indications of a transverse building at the north end suggest that the reredorter, of which there are no other remains, occupied that position."

"The whole of the north side of the cloister was covered by the *refectorium* or frater. Like the dorter, it was on the first floor, but there is none of it left. . . . The sub-vault was ten bays long, and divided into two alleys by a central row of pillars. . . . The doorway next to the western passage" (in the end bay), "from its position in the range, most likely opened upon a flight of steps leading up to the frater."

"Immediately to the west of the frater, in the angle formed by it and the western range, was the kitchen. It was an oblong building,

[7] *Et seq.*, p. 14. [8] *Et seq.*, p. 15. [9] *Et seq.*, p. 16.

about 30 feet long and 19 feet wide, standing detached from and not quite square with the main building."

"From the kitchen to the church, and covering the west side of the cloister, was a range of buildings 112 feet long and about 24 feet wide, with a return westwards near its south end." [10]

"The entrance was in the north end of the west wall, through a porch about 13 feet wide. The north side of this porch . . . probably contained the staircase to the upper story."

"It is uncertain to what use this western range was put. The basement was probably in part a storeplace, but it may also have included an outer parlour where the nuns could talk with their relations under the conditions already noticed. The rest of it was most likely occupied by the lay-sisters; . . . and as it was one of their duties to attend to guests, the upper story of the range probably served, at any rate in part, as the *hospitium* or guest-house, as well as the dorter of the lay-sisters." [11]

"The upper story" (of a building between the western range and the church) "probably contained an oratory for the use of guests who were not allowed to enter the nuns' church. They apparently might hear the service from a gallery or closet, but were to withdraw before the nuns left their places, so as to avoid being seen." [12]

"There is nothing to show where the nuns' infirmary stood."

"From a doorway in the middle of the east wall of the dorter subvault a covered passage, about 5 feet wide, with thin walls, led eastwards for about 80 feet to a small building of doubtful dimensions, of which only some scanty fragments remained. . . . As the building stood midway between the two cloisters, it probably also communicated with the eastern or canons' cloister by another passage leading directly to it, but this had been utterly destroyed. . . . It is likely that the building formed the *domus fenestræ* or window-house. This seems to have contained a very small window (*fenestra parvula*), at which conversation was carried on between the nuns and canons, and a great turning window (*magna fenestra versatilis*), through which food and other things could be passed."

"The Canons' Court."

"The buildings of the canons' court, so far as they have been traced, consisted of a cloister 100 feet square, surrounded by vaulted alleys 14 feet wide, having on the east the dorter, above an undercroft containing the chapter-house, parlour, warming-house, etc., on the south the chapel, on the west the hall, and on the north the frater, which stood partly over the north alley of the cloister and partly over a vaulted undercroft parallel with it. Attached to the south-west angle of the cloister was the prior's lodging." [13]

[10] *Et seq.*, p. 17. [11] P. 18. [12] *Et seq.*, p. 19. [13] P. 20.

Considerable light has been thrown on the buildings surrounding the canons' cloister by a "survey that was made of them for the sake of the lead before they were dismantled." [14]

The canons' dorter "formed the upper story of the eastern range, which was 118 feet long and 29½ feet wide. . . . The 'Jakis House' or reredorter was most likely at the north end; it was 22½ feet long and 12 feet wide, and the entry to it 16½ feet long and 13½ feet wide." [15]

"The dorter stood upon a vaulted undercroft with a central row of columns, extending northwards for eight bays from the south-east angle of the cloister. This sub-vault was divided by partition-walls into at least four apartments" :—a cellar or store place, three bays long; the *calefactorium* or warming-house, two bays long; the *auditorium* or parlour, of one bay; lastly, the chapter-house, 47 feet long and 29¼ feet wide.[16]

"The eastern range abuts on the south against the canons' chapel. It was an aisleless parallelogram measuring 114½ feet in length by 24¼ feet in width, with certainly one, probably two doorways from the cloister alley. . . ." [17] "There was a vaulted ante-chapel in the western end, probably to support a gallery where guests might attend the services."

"After the chapel the Survey mentions the 'olde dinyng chamber.' This must refer to the fourteenth century building, which is still complete, attached to the chapel on the south-west. It is three stories high." [18]

"Of the 'oulde haull,' 'ij Chambers caullid 'the haull side,' the 'haull staires,' and the 'old kytchen,' there are no remains."

"Against the eastern half of the 'old dinyng chamber' block there was clearly a two-storied building. The lower story was vaulted, and probably served as an entry into the cloister. The upper story formed the 'littel Chapell ioyninge to the olde Dinyng chambre,' next mentioned in the Survey." [19]

"The next item in the Survey . . . is 'the haull syde leades.' There can be little doubt that this entry refers to the west side of the cloister, which adjoined the hall, and the length given, 27 yards, or 81 feet, is almost exactly that from the little chapel northwards to the north end of the hall, while the width, 5½ yards, or 16½ feet, is the extreme breadth of the cloister alley."

"Both the hall and hall side ended northwards against the frater." [20]

"The usual place for the frater was against that side of the cloister which was remote from the church, and the dimensions given enable us to assign it this position here. In most houses of canons the frater stood upon an undercroft, which served as

[14] Pp. 22, 23. [15] *Et seq.*, p. 24. [16] P. 24. [17] *Et seq.*, p. 25.
[18] *Et seq.*, p. 26. [19] *Et seq.*, p. 27. [20] *Et seq.*, p. 28.

cellarage, but in this instance the sub-vault was only half the width of the frater, which must, therefore, have extended southwards over the north alley of the cloister."

"The frater was no doubt reached by a continuation of the steps in the north-west angle of the cloister. Its total length was 111½ feet and its breadth 28¾ feet, but the westernmost bay would be cut off to form the screens, leaving seven bays clear to form the frater proper; its position over the cloister enabled it to be well lighted from both sides."

"According to the Statutes, the food served in the canons' frater was cooked in the nuns' kitchen and passed through the turn in the window-house. As this kitchen at Watton was 350 feet away from the frater, it is difficult to see how the dishes were kept hot during such a journey, especially with the additional delay midway, while they were being passed through the turning window. It is, therefore, not surprising to find, as we do from the Survey, that the canons had a kitchen of their own, which no doubt served the frater as well as the old hall. Its possible position is indicated on the plan."

"Of the 'lytill garner in the yarde' we know nothing beyond the dimensions of its roof, 54 feet by 21 feet. It was perhaps placed to close in the west side of a yard next the old hall, and so helped to shut out the view of the nuns' cloister."

"The existing house upon the site consists of three blocks: (i.) that on the north already noticed under the name of the 'olde dinyng chamber;' (ii.) a smaller and later block to the south; and (iii.) a larger and still later block on the west."[21]

"The smaller block is a three-storied camera of the fifteenth century, standing east and west against the south wall of the fourteenth century block."

"The western wing, unlike the others, which are for the most part of ashlar, is built throughout of brick, with stone dressings. It now consists of a three-storied block, standing north and south, with large octagonal turrets at the western angles and a lesser turret at the south-east corner containing the staircase. Projecting from the west front towards its northern end is a handsome two-storied oriel."

"The house had formerly a wing at the south end, also of three stories, projecting from it westwards just north of the turret, but it was taken down about 1840, and all traces of the junction carefully effaced."

"There can be little doubt that the existing house formed the prior's *camera* or lodging. In the fourteenth century it consisted of the northern block only, but in the next century this was enlarged

[21] *Et seq.*, p. 29.

by the southern block. About the end of the fifteenth century the western block was added." [22]

"It may be concluded that the prior also lodged here, as was usual, persons of quality who were the guests of the monastery. The ordinary guests of the middle class would, of course, be housed by the cellarer in the old hall and the chambers forming the 'hall side.'" [23]

"The canons' infirmary has yet to be sought for, either eastwards of their cloister, which is the more likely place, and where there is plenty of room for it, or south of their chapel."

"One other point on which light is wanted is the way by which the canons went from their cloister to the great church, where their quire was in the south aisle. If the 'hall side' stood where suggested in the plan, the canons might have left the cloister by the entry under the little chapel, and traversed a pentise extending along the hall end and 'hall side,' and thence to the south-east angle of the church and round to a doorway in the south wall. We have, of course, no evidence of this course, but it is not easy to suggest a simple alternative, and in view of the fondness for pentises in religious houses it may have been that actually adopted. The space between such a pentise and the nuns' cemetery wall would serve for the canons' cemetery."

"The Survey makes no mention of any building that could have been used by the conversi (lay-brothers), and there is no accommodation for them in the canons' cloister. Possibly by the time the latter was rebuilt the *conversi*, as among the Cistercians, had given place to hired servants, who for the most part lived at the granges. If any such were lodged in the priory their quarters have yet to be found."

"The outer court of the priory must have been on the north, and the entrance to it on the west where the lane now called the Avenue abuts on the precinct. There are no remains of the gatehouse nor of any of the buildings, such as the stables, bakehouse, brewhouse, etc., that usually stood in the outer court. The only building now on the site is a long range of stabling, etc., standing east and west, to the north of the present house . . . but it is apparently of a date subsequent to the suppression of the priory." [24]

[22] P. 30. [23] *Et seq.*, p. 31. [24] P. 32.

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